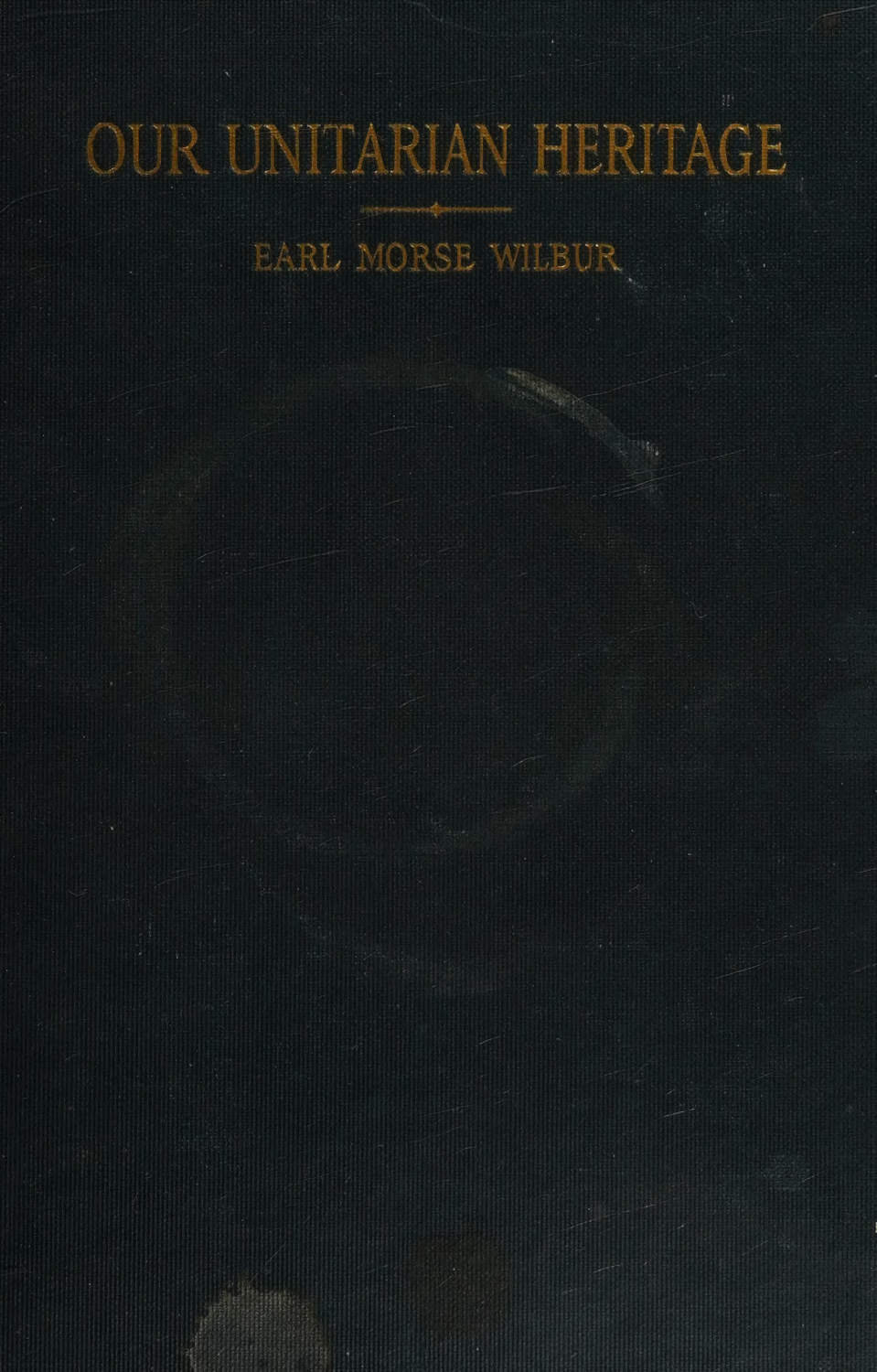
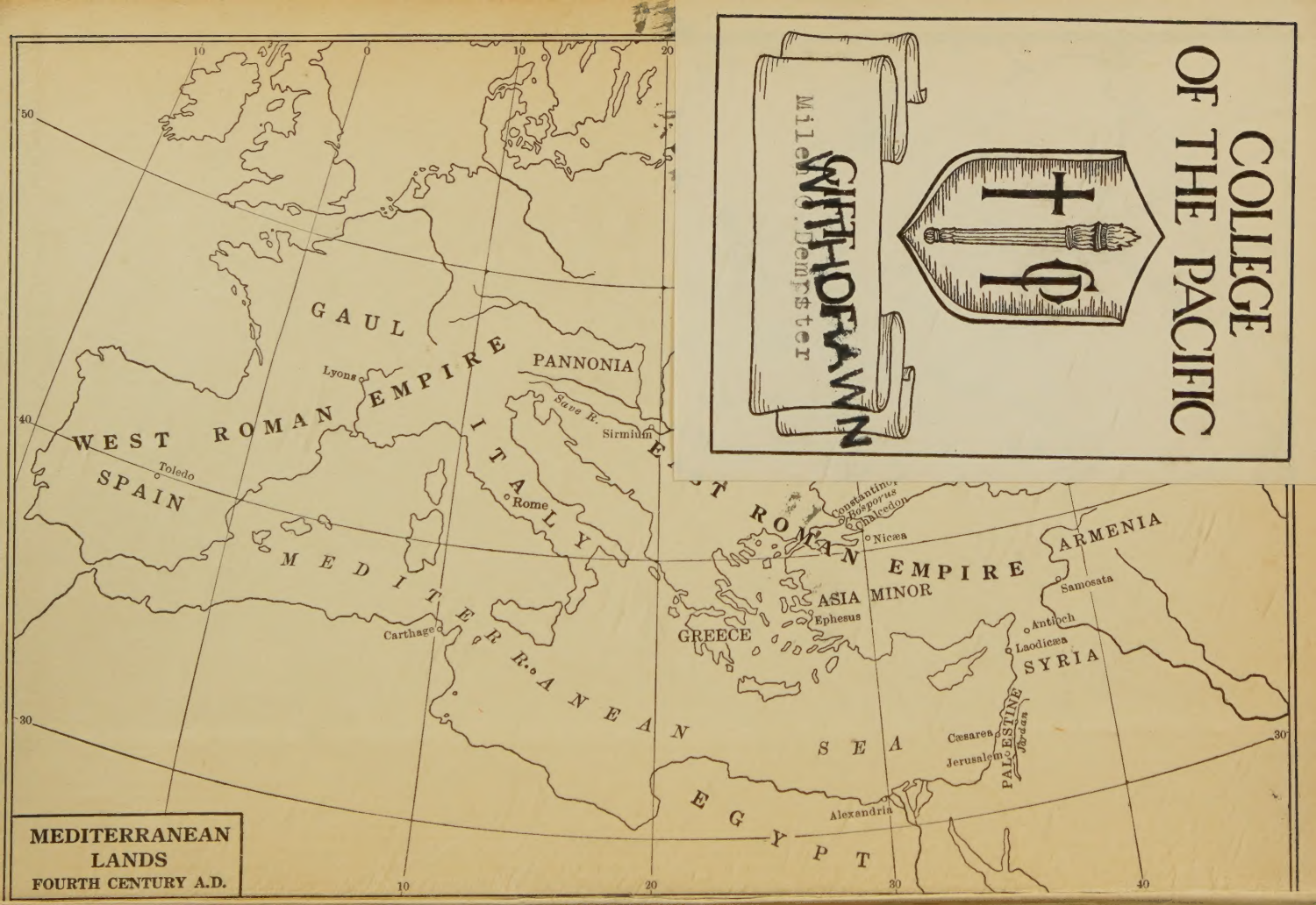
OUR UNITARIAN HERITAGE

EARL MORSE WILBUR





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Milen C. Dempster

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

OUR UNITARIAN HERITAGE

An Introduction to the History of the Unitarian Movement

BY

EARL MORSE WILBUR

PRESIDENT OF THE PACIFIC UNITARIAN SCHOOL FOR THE MINISTRY

BOSTON

THE BEACON PRESS, INC.

25 BEACON STREET

College of the Pacific
Stockton, Calif.

Gift of
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PREFACE

The present work has been prepared by request of the Department of Religious Education as a part of The Beacon Course. No one else can regret so much as the author that the preparation of it has been so long protracted; but the collection and working over a vast amount of material in nine different languages, which was essential to a satisfactory product, has involved great difficulties, and the whole has had to be done subject to the prior demands of an exacting office.

The work is primarily designed for the use of young people presumed to be sixteen or seventeen years of age, and this fact has of course dictated scope, selection of materials, and method of treatment. It has been necessary to study the utmost compression consistent with a just treatment of the subject, and even now the work is longer by half than would have been desirable. Much more space should be given to the doctrinal element which has bulked so large in the actual movement, but this would not have been to the purpose intended. It would also have been desirable to quote generously from authorities used, to give full references to sources, and to state convincing reasons for positions taken; but these things would have served another public than the one for which the work was designed. Despite these limitations, however, the author would say that he has written as far as possible directly from the sources, and has used every endeavor to make his work as careful and accurate as if its display of scholarship were greater.

In the nearly forty years since the publication of Pro-

fessor Allen's *Historical Sketch* (the only work hitherto that could make any real claim to being a history of Unitarianism), many new sources have been brought to light, and much has been published bearing especially on the European phases of the subject. The present work is therefore able to give for the first time in English much interesting and important material; and in spite of its being somewhat elementary in scope and popular in form, the author ventures to hope that it may be found quite the most adequate treatment of the subject as yet produced. If permitted, however, to continue his studies in this field, he hopes some years hence to present a work much more complete, and duly fortified with all the authorities that a history should give.

For assistance given him the author is indebted to more kind friends than can be named here; but he wishes especially to acknowledge his obligation to the following persons who have read one or other of the several divisions in manuscript, and have made many helpful suggestions: the Rev. William Laurence Sullivan of New York; the Rev. Alexander Gordon of Belfast, Ireland; Professor George Rapall Noyes of the University of California; Professor Stanislaw Kot of the University of Krakow, Poland; Professor George Boros of the Unitarian College, Kolozsvar, Transylvania; Professors J. Estlin Carpenter and James Edwin Odgers of Manchester College, Oxford; and the late Rev. William Channing Gannett of Rochester, N. Y.

It is hoped that the Index will facilitate the use of the work, and especially the pronunciation of the large number of foreign names occurring in the text.

E. M. W.

Rome, March 7, 1925.

IMPORTANT DATES IN UNITARIAN HISTORY

THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH

c. 160	Apostles' Creed composed.
c. 260	Paul of Samosata and Sabellius flourish.
318–380	The Arian Controversy.
325	Council of Nicæa: the Nicene Creed adopted.
380	Theodosius makes acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity compulsory.
381	Council of Constantinople adopts the revised Nicene Creed.
388	Arianism suppressed in the Western Roman Empire.
431	Council of Ephesus.
451	Council of Chalcedon.
c. 460 ?	Athanasian Creed composed.

THE REFORMATION AGE: Pioneer Unitarians

1509	Calvin born.
1510	Francis David born.
1511	Servetus born.
c. 1515	Biandrata born.
1516	Erasmus's Greek New Testament.
1517	Beginning of the Protestant Reformation.
1525	Rise of Anabaptism.
1526	Equal toleration granted in the Grisons to Protestants and Catholics.
1527	Cellarius publishes the earliest book against the doctrine of the Trinity.
1530	Diet of Augsburg; the Augsburg Confession.
1531	Servetus publishes *De Trinitatis Erroribus.*
1532	Servetus publishes *Dialogues on the Trinity.*
1539	Order of Jesuits founded. Faustus Socinus born.
1542	Italian Inquisition established.
1550	Anabaptist Council at Venice accepts humanity of Christ.
1553	Servetus publishes *Christianismi Restitutio:* condemned to

death at Vienne; burned at the stake at Geneva, October 27.

1562 Lælius Socinus dies at Zürich.

1563 Ochino publishes *Dialogues* and is banished from Zürich.

1564 Calvin dies at Geneva. Ochino is banished from Poland and dies in Moravia.

1566 Helvetic Confession adopted by the Swiss churches. Gentile beheaded at Bern.

POLAND AND SOCINIANISM

1546 Antitrinitarianism first appears in Poland.

1555 Gonesius attacks the doctrine of the Trinity of Secemin.

1558 Biandrata comes from Geneva to Poland.
Pinczow Reformed Church becomes Antitrinitarian.

1563 Biandrata leaves Poland for Transylvania.

1564 Jesuits enter Poland.

1565 Diet of Piotrkow: Minor Reformed Church organized.

1569 Rakow founded.

1570 *Consensus Sandomiriensis.*

1573 *Pax Dissidentium* establishes religious toleration in Poland.

1574 Schomann's Catechism published in Poland.

1579 Faustus Socinus comes to Poland.

1588 Socinus unites all the Antitrinitarian factions at the Synod of Brest.

1591 Socinian meeting-place at Krakow destroyed by a mob.

1598 Socinus mobbed at Krakow. Ostorod and Wojdowski introduce Socinianism into Holland.

1603 Socinus dies at Luclawice.

1605 Racovian Catechism published.

1611 Jan Tyskiewicz burned at the stake at Warsaw.

1616 Socinian students expelled from Altorf.

1638 Socinians driven from Rakow.

1658 Polish Diet decrees banishment of Socinians.

1660 Socinians finally banished from Poland, July 10.

1742 Last persecution of Socinians in Holland.

1784 Socinian church at Kolozsvar disbands.

1811 Socinianism becomes extinct in Prussia.

TRANSYLVANIA

1510 Francis David born.

1540 John Sigismund born.

1555 David becomes Lutheran.
1557 David become Lutheran bishop. Diet of Torda decrees equal toleration to Protestants and Catholics.
1558 Thomas Aran publishes a book against the doctrine of the Trinity.
1563 Biandrata comes from Poland to Transylvania. Diet of Torda extends toleration to Calvinists.
1564 David becomes Reformed bishop.
1566 David begins open opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinity debated at Gyulafehervar and Torda.
1568 Debate on Trinity at Gyulafehervar, March 8–17. Kolozsvar becomes Unitarian. David successfully pleads for full toleration at Diet of Torda. David becomes Unitarian bishop. Unitarian Church in Transylvania organizes.
1569 Debate on Trinity at Nagyvarad, October 10–15.
1571 Rights of the Unitarian Church confirmed at Diet of Maros Vasarhely. John Sigismund dies, March 15.
1574 George Alvinczi hanged in Hungary for denying the doctrine of the Trinity.
1578 Socinus comes from Basel to Kolozsvar.
1579 David is tried for innovation, condemned, and dies in prison, November 15.
1603 Moses Szekely killed in battle.
1638 *Complanatio Deesiana* adopted.
1660 Polish exiles arrive at Kolozsvar.
1691 *Diploma Leopoldinum* issued.
1693 Unitarians lose their school at Kolozsvar.
1716 Unitarians lose the great church at Kolozsvar.
1780 Joseph II issues Edict of Toleration.
1781 Szent Abrahami's *Summa Theologiæ* published.
1821 English and Transylvanian Unitarians discover each other.
1857 Austrian government attempts to destroy Unitarian schools.
1873 Unitarian church organized at Budapest.

ENGLAND

c. 1380 Wyclif's translation of the Bible.
1525 Tyndale's New Testament.
1534 The English Reformation.
1550 Church of the Strangers established in London.

1551 Dr. George van Parris burned at the stake.
1565 Aconzio's *Stratagems of Satan* published.
1612 Bartholomew Legate and Edward Wightman burned at the stake.
1615/6 John Bidle born.
1647 Bidle's *XII. Arguments.*
1648 Bidle's *Confession of Faith.*
1651/2 Racovian Catechism published in London and ordered burned.
1654 Bidle's *Twofold Catechism.*
1655 Bidle banished to the Scilly Islands.
1662 Bidle dies, September 22.
1662 Act of Uniformity.
1676 Law for burning of heretics repealed in England.
1687 Nye's *Brief History of the Unitarians.*
1689 Toleration Act.
1695 Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity.*
1698 Blasphemy Act.
1702 Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry.*
1703 Emlyn is imprisoned at Dublin.
1712 Clarke's *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity.*
1719 Exeter Arian Controversy. Salters' Hall Assembly.
1723 Theophilus Lindsey born.
1735 Joseph Priestley born.
1766 Blackburne's *Confessional.*
1772 Feathers' Tavern Petition.
1774 Lindsey opens Essex Hall Chapel, April 17.
1783 Society for Promoting Knowledge of the Scriptures.
1791 Unitarian Book Society. Birmingham riots.
1794 Priestley emigrates to America.
1804 Priestley dies.
1806 Unitarian Fund.
1808 Improved Version of the New Testament.
1813 Blasphemy Act repealed.
1817 Wolverhampton Chapel case.
1819 Association for Protection of Civil Rights of Unitarians.
1825 British and Foreign Unitarian Association formed, May 25.
1828 Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts.
1830–42 Lady Hewley Case.
1844 Dissenters' Chapels Act.
1871 Tests abolished at English universities.

AMERICA

1740 Great Awakening.
1785 King's Chapel Liturgy.
1805 Sherman's *One God in One Person Only*. Henry Ware elected Hollis Professor at Harvard.
1815 "American Unitarianism" published.
1818–20 The Dedham Case.
1819 Channing's Baltimore Sermon.
1825 American Unitarian Association formed, May 25.
1838 Emerson's Divinity School Address.
1841 Parker's South Boston Sermon.
1852 Western Unitarian Conference formed.
1865 National Conference of Unitarian Churches.
1867 Free Religious Association.
1875 Year Book Controversy.
1890 National Alliance.
1896 Young People's Religious Union.
1900 International Congress of Free Christians.
1908 National Federation of Religious Liberals.
1919 Laymen's League.
1925 General Conference merged with the American Unitarian Association.

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DIVISION I

CHRISTIANITY BEFORE UNITARIANISM

OUR UNITARIAN HERITAGE

CHAPTER I

RELIGION AS A HERITAGE

Our religious faith, as the title of this book implies, is a heritage. We did not form it independently for ourselves. Many of us did not even choose it, but instead received it as a precious legacy, bequeathed to us by those who have cherished it before us. Of course it ought to be much more than merely this. If it is to amount to anything vital, it should include at least these three elements: a profound conviction on some of the greatest subjects of thought, a sacred personal experience hallowing the deepest part of our lives, and above all a way of living as children of God. Yet none of even these things wholly originated with ourselves; for to no small extent our convictions were implanted in us, our experiences were cultivated within us, and our way of life was trained into us, by others. The religion of some people, indeed, seems to be an inheritance and little else, a tradition handed down to them by others, rather than a matter of personal conviction, experience, or principle; although even such a religion may yet make a very important difference in their lives.

Inasmuch, then, as our religion has to a very considerable degree come down to us from the past, we must, if we would appreciate anything like its full meaning, know its past his-

tory. We shall appreciate more deeply the value of our religious faith if we once come to realize how much it has cost others to win what they have freely bequeathed to us: the thinkers who have labored over its problems, the apostles who have spent their lives in spreading the knowledge of it among men, the saints who have made its history sacred, the confessors who have endured reproach and loss, persecution and exile for it, and the noble army of martyrs who have suffered death rather than be untrue to it. The meaning of the religious faith we hold, and the price it has cost to secure it to us: these are the two points most strongly suggested by the title, "Our Unitarian Heritage," and it is these that we shall try to keep constantly in view as we follow the course of its history.

We are familiar enough with this point of view in connection with our national life. As mere citizens we might in any case have been fairly satisfied with our native land, even though we had done nothing to make it what it is, but had simply entered into it as an inheritance from our forefathers. But when we read the history of our country, when we see how our fathers had to toil to subdue the wilderness, how they fought and bled to make it free, strove to develop its institutions, and struggled to defend it against its enemies, that they might leave it free and strong to their children—it is only then that we begin to appreciate what our country really means to us, to realize what its free institutions cost, to love it with patriotic love, and to feel that if need be we too would gladly suffer and die for it; and that in any event we will do all in our power to keep it forever a land of freedom and justice to all.

It is quite the same with regard to the inheritance we have received in our religious faith. We may have been simply born into it, and may always have taken it for

granted. We may never have had to struggle to win religious freedom, nor to sacrifice or suffer to maintain it. But when we have once read its history, and have seen how in earlier generations many men in many lands had to struggle, to sacrifice, to suffer, and in not a few cases even to die, before we could inherit our free faith, and how earnestly even in happier times and at smaller cost devoted men have labored to make religious faith purer, more reasonable, and more inspiring with each new age; then we can not fail to appreciate as never before the faith which we hold, and we shall our own selves wish to be loyal to it, and to prove ourselves worthy of the freedom it gives us.

For this is to be the story of *a progressive movement toward perfect freedom of thought and speech in religion*, a freedom which has been won only in the face of odds sometimes overwhelming, and at a cost that no one, thank God, is in our time called upon to pay. It is a history rich in its saints and sages, its heroes and martyrs, and it is full of deeds of bravery that kindle the blood. The roots of this religious faith go back, of course, to earliest Christian times; and the glory and the inspirations of fifteen centuries of the history of the undivided Christian Church belong to it in common with all Christendom. But the story of this particular religious movement begins scarcely four hundred years ago, early in the period of the Protestant Reformation.

In tracing the story of the development of our faith during these four centuries, it will not be enough for us merely to get hold of the facts of a past history. Our study of these will be to little purpose if we do not at the same time get a proper sense of what they mean for us in our own time, and of the obligation they lay upon us as possessors of a heritage that is precious and costly. As an early

Christian writer wrote of a similar situation,[1] we ought to realize that, although these heroes of our faith bore a good witness in their day, God has also placed upon us a sacred duty to continue and complete their work, since without us they will not be made perfect.

[1] Hebrews 11:39, 40.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The common notion of Unitarianism is that it is a system of doctrine centering about belief in one God in one person (as contrasted with the Trinitarian belief in one God in three persons), and the closely related belief in the true humanity of Jesus (as contrasted with the Trinitarian belief in his deity, or supreme divinity). Unitarians who best understand their movement, however, attach much less importance to-day to these or any other particular doctrines than to certain fundamental principles of religion, centering around freedom and reason. In fact, as a matter of history, although it was the Unitarian doctrines that were first developed, and although these have been made especially prominent through controversy, and have been the occasion of long continued persecution, yet almost from the first Unitarians laid strong emphasis upon the importance of religious freedom, and asserted the rights of reason in religion; and the further the movement has proceeded, the more the emphasis has been shifted from its doctrines to its underlying principles. While we shall need, therefore, throughout the whole of our study, to keep in view the doctrines associated with this movement, we should remember that this is in its most important aspect a progressive movement toward a fuller use of reason, and a more perfect enjoyment of liberty in religion.

The history of modern Unitarianism begins, as we have

said, early in the period of the Protestant Reformation. That is to say, we can not trace any continuous development of Unitarian thought back of that time. Yet it has often been maintained that Unitarianism is simply a return from corrupted doctrines of orthodox Christianity to the pure religion of the New Testament. We shall so frequently see this claim asserted in the course of our history that we must at the outset inquire how far it is justified. Since Unitarianism from the sixteenth century on has also been largely characterized by its protests against the doctrines known as orthodox, we must also get our start toward an understanding of the movement by trying to discover what those doctrines were which the fathers of our faith felt obliged, even at the risk of their lives, to disbelieve and oppose, and how and why they came to grow up out of the simple religion of Jesus and his first disciples. Understanding these things, we shall be able at the same time to judge them more fairly. For it is possible to trace every stage of the process by which, in the course of five or six centuries or less, the simple religion of the parables and the sermon on the mount was gradually transformed into the elaborate doctrines of the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds. This we shall now proceed briefly to do.

To learn, then, what Jesus and his earliest disciples taught, we have to turn to the first three Gospels. These were written probably between 70 and about 100 A. D., hence from one to two generations after the death of Jesus. They therefore date from a time when the primitive belief had already begun to undergo change, and when that long process had commenced which we are about to trace, and which ended in the doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ. Yet these Gospels also show many traces of the earlier and simpler belief, as it existed in the very time

of Jesus; and it is these traces that we shall first notice.

To begin with, there is in these three Gospels not the remotest suggestion of the doctrine of the Trinity.[1] Such a doctrine would have seemed to Jesus or any other Jew of his age as little short of blasphemy; for during long centuries of their national humiliation no other conviction had been so deeply burned into the consciousness of the Jewish people as their belief in the absolute and unqualified oneness of God. In fact, down to this very day, nothing else has proved such an impassable barrier to the reception of Christianity by the Jews, as has the doctrine of the Trinity, which has seemed to them to undermine the very cornerstone of their religion.[2] In these Gospels we find Jesus simply regarded as the Messiah—a man, sent of God for a high purpose, endowed with superior powers, yet dependent upon God, acknowledging himself not so good as God, and limited in knowledge, authority, and power.[3] This primitive belief long survived among a little sect of Jewish Christians known as Ebionites. They early became separated from the rest of the Christian Church and lived an isolated life east of the Jordan, and as late as the fifth century they retained their original belief in the unity of God, and in the pure humanity and the natural birth of Jesus.

When we turn to the writings of Paul, a short generation after Jesus, we find this simple, natural view of Jesus already becoming transformed. In the epistles bearing Paul's name (some of them doubtless written after his time, though

[1] The text which might to some seem most clearly to imply this doctrine (Matthew 28:19), apart from the strong suspicion of its late origin, does not imply that each of the three is God, still less that the three are one.

[2] The same obstacle has effectually prevented any large spread of Christianity among Mohammedans.

[3] See Mark 14:36; 15:34; 10:18; 13:32; 10:40; 6:5.

more or less resembling his thought), and written from 53 to 64 A. D. or later, the figure of Jesus, receding into the distance of the past as Paul and his fellow-Christians reverently contemplate it, has grown less distinct, but at the same time grander. He is still sometimes referred to as a man, but more often as Lord; he is spoken of as sent from heaven, where he existed with God before the creation of the world; God is said to have created the world through his agency; he is regarded as in a sense divine, though still as subordinate to God.[1]

In the fourth Gospel, ascribed to the apostle John, but now believed to have been written by a later Christian, perhaps about 125 A. D., we find a yet more exalted view of Jesus. He is here identified with the Word, or *Logos;* and since this term plays so large a part in the following development of belief about Jesus, we must pause here to explain it. The conception is supposed to have grown up somewhat as follows: philosophers in the first century were accustomed to think of God as being, in his perfect wisdom and holiness, so far superior to this imperfect and sinful world that he could not be supposed himself to have had anything directly to do with the creation or with men. But Philo, a Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, discovered in the Old Testament certain passages seeming to refer to a sort of personified Wisdom, or Word, or *Logos*, through which as an intermediate being God had created the world and communicated with man.[2] This *Logos* thus seemed to him to bridge the great gulf otherwise existing between God and his world. At the same time there was also in the Greek

[1] See Romans 5:15; I Corinthians 15:21, 27, 45, 47; 12:3; 8:6; II Corinthians 4:5; 5:21; 12:8, 9; Colossians 1:15–17, 19; 2:9; Philippians 2:6, 7.

[2] E. g., Psalm 33:6; 147:15; Isaiah 55:11; Jeremiah 23:29; Proverbs 8, 9.

philosophy of the period a belief that a divine *Logos*, or Reason,[1] was manifested in the universe as a kind of world-soul. These two views, then, the one Jewish and the other Greek, became more or less blended in Jewish and Greek thought from the end of the first century, and this *Logos* idea became widely accepted by both Jews and Greeks as one of the staple elements in their religious teaching, because it solved for them what they felt to be a critical religious problem—how sinful man might come into harmony with the perfect God.

Now the great purpose of the author of the fourth Gospel was to recommend the Christian religion to those who held this *Logos* view, by showing them that the *Logos* was none other than Jesus himself, the founder of that religion, who had been with God in the beginning, had been his agent in the creation of the world, and had at length taken the form of a human being, thus becoming one through whom the holy God and sinful men might be brought together. The *Logos* doctrine in this Gospel was the highest point reached in the development of the New Testament teaching about Jesus; but although it sometimes almost seems to make Jesus one with God, in other passages it makes it clear nevertheless that he was less than God, and derived his being, and all his power and authority, from him.[2] It was directly from this *Logos* doctrine, however, that the development followed which in the fourth century ended in the fully developed doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ. That further progress of Christian thought we are now ready to follow.

[1] The Greek word *Logos* meant both *word,* and *reason.*

[2] See John 1:1–14; 14:6, 9, 11; 8:23, 58; 10:30. Also 14:28; 3:35; 5:19, 22, 26, 30; 7:16; 8:28; 17:21.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE DOWN TO THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA, 325 A. D.

In the last chapter we traced the development of the New Testament teaching about Jesus, and saw that there was a steady progress of thought which began by regarding Jesus as truly human, simply a man, and ended by regarding him as the *Logos*, in some sense divine, and little less than God; though there was as yet no doctrine of the Trinity, and no belief in the complete deity of Christ. But the *Logos* doctrine of the fourth Gospel furnished the germ out of which within the next two or three centuries those doctrines were to develop. We must now follow the steps which this further development took.

After all the immediate disciples of Jesus had passed away, and the Apostolic Age had come to an end with the close of the first century, there followed for something more than a hundred years what is known as the Age of the Apologists, during which Christians had to defend their new religion against the attacks of Jews or of Pagans, and were trying to prove it superior to the older religions. The writers who made this defense are known as the Apologists. Some of their writings have come down to us, and form the earliest Christian literature after the New Testament. They themselves were the earliest Christian theologians, trying to state their religious beliefs in systematic form; and

their writings therefore serve to show us how Christian doctrines were taking shape. The problem they were all earnestly trying to solve, in order to state the philosophy of Christianity in such a way that educated Greeks might accept it, was this: How was the *Logos* (now fully accepted as a fixed item in Christian thought) related to the infinite and eternal God on the one hand, and to the man Jesus of Nazareth on the other? They could not hope to see Christianity make much progress in the Greek world until this problem was satisfactorily solved. Yet it was a difficult problem, for the nearer they made him to God, the more unreal his human life seemed to be; while the more fully they recognized his humanity, the farther he seemed to be from God. It is these Apologists that take the next steps leading from the simpler teaching of the New Testament, far toward the doctrine of the Deity of Christ, as we shall now see by looking briefly at what four of the most prominent of them wrote.

Justin Martyr had been a Greek philosopher before his conversion to Christianity. As a Christian he wrote at Rome, some time after the year 140, two Apologies and other writings in defense of Christianity. In these he teaches that the divine Reason, or *Logos*, was begotten by God, as his first-born, before the creation of the world. Through him God created the world. He was a distinct person from God, and inferior to him, yet he might be worshiped as a divine being. He became a man upon earth in the person of Jesus.

Irenæus, who had been born in Asia Minor, went as missionary to southern Gaul, and there in 178 he became Bishop of Lyons. He wrote a book against heresies, in which he taught that the *Logos* existed before the creation of the world, and was God's first-born Son. The *Logos* was

thus truly divine, although distinct from God and inferior to him; and he became a man in Jesus, and suffered as a man, in order to bring mankind nearer to God.

Clement of Alexandria was born in the Greek religion, but after his conversion to Christianity he became the most eminent Christian philosopher of his time, and had great influence on the thought of the Eastern Church. In works written after 190 he teaches that the *Logos* was in the beginning with God, and was somehow God, and hence deserved to be worshiped; and yet he was below the Father in rank. In Jesus he became a man, that we might learn from him how a man may become God. Clement also took a further step toward the doctrine of the Trinity, when he spoke of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a "holy triad."

Tertullian was born at Carthage about 150, and was a pagan in religion until middle life; but after his conversion to Christianity he became as influential in the thought of the Western Church as Clement was in the Eastern. In his writings he teaches that the Son (or *Logos*) existed before creation, and was of one substance with God, though distinct from him and subordinate to him. He was born upon earth as Jesus; and Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mysteriously united into a *trinity*—a term which Tertullian was the first to introduce.

These four examples are enough to show what was going on in Christian thought during the century after the fourth Gospel appeared. There was a growing tendency, while still insisting that Christ was less than God, to regard him more and more as divine. Yet in this tendency there were two dangers. As theologians speculated upon the *Logos*, they were more and more losing sight of the human character of Jesus, and there was a fear lest Christianity should presently find itself worshiping two divine beings instead of

one God. This latter danger was keenly felt by those who regarded the religion of the Roman Empire, in which it was customary to deify and worship the Emperors. So that in opposition to the beliefs we have above noticed as growing up, a contrary tendency also asserted itself, and spread widely, under the name of Monarchianism. The Monarchians were strict monotheists. They objected that if Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were all divine, then Christianity had three Gods; and they insisted instead that God was one person as well as one being.

There were two persons closely associated with this opposing view whose names deserve to be mentioned and remembered in a history of Unitarianism. One was Paul of Samosata. He became in 260 Bishop of Antioch, the most important see in the Eastern Church. He taught that though Jesus was originally a man like other men, he gradually became divine, and finally became completely united with God. He was accused of heresy by theological and political enemies, and after three trials was at length deposed from his office and excommunicated from the Church, about 268. Various Unitarians in later times held views more or less resembling his, and they were therefore sometimes called Samosatenians or Paulianists.

More famous yet, though of his life little is now known, was Sabellius, whose teaching proved very attractive to large numbers. He sought to preserve the unity of God, and at the same time to make the mystery of the Trinity more easy to comprehend, by teaching that the one God *manifested* himself in three different ways, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But this teaching seemed to his opponents to make Christ unreal, a mere reflection of another being, and it was therefore condemned as a heresy, and Sabellius himself was excommunicated from the church at Alexan-

dria, about 260. Sabellianism, however, did not become extinct, for it has often reappeared in Christian history down to this very day. Not only have Unitarians often held Sabellian views, and often been called Sabellians by the orthodox, but professed Trinitarians have often given their explanation of the Trinity in Sabellian terms, and have thus really been heretical.

The great popularity of these Monarchian views in the third century shows that the movement toward the doctrine of the Trinity did not go on without much opposition; and Tertullian complains of how in his time the majority of Christians, being ignorant (of philosophical speculations), still hold to the simple unity of God, and are mistrustful of the Trinity.

After Monarchianism had been suppressed, various attempts were made to state the relation of Christ [1] to God in some way which should avoid Sabellianism on the one hand, and tritheism on the other. One of these attempts was embodied in the view known as Arianism; and this has had such important relations with Unitarianism, and it comes up so often in the course of Unitarian history, that it deserves to be made as clear as possible. The bishop of Alexandria, Alexander by name, about 318 tried to make the matter clearer by teaching that Christ had never had a beginning any more than God himself, that he had always been the Son of God, "eternally begotten" by him, and that he was of the same essential being or nature with the Father.[2] Now there was in Alexandria a certain presbyter (priest or minister) of one of the parish churches, Arius

[1] The term *Logos* was now passing out of use, and was becoming replaced by Christ, or the Son.

[2] The language of the creeds is, "of one *substance* with the Father"; but the word "substance" in this connection is misleading to the average reader.

by name, who felt bound to oppose this teaching. Arius was a man well on in years, grave in manner, keen in argument, extremely self-denying in his life, and highly respected in the city for his piety and his work among the lower classes. He urged that this teaching of Alexander was mere Sabellianism, and that it practically meant belief in two Gods. He held, on the contrary, that Christ was not equal to God, but inferior to him; that he did not exist with God from all eternity, but was created by him before the creation of the world; that he was not of the same "substance" with the Father, but was created out of nothing. This was Arianism: *the belief that Christ, though a being far above man, was yet less than God; that he was created before the creation of the world; and that he was of a different nature from either God or man.* It will be well to recall this definition whenever Arianism is referred to in the course of the following history.

Controversy over the question now became general, and lasted some three years. The bishop at length commanded Arius to change his views; but Arius, as he wrote to a friend, said he would die a thousand deaths sooner than assent to opinions he did not believe. He was accordingly deposed from office along with several of his followers, was excommunicated from the Church by a council at Alexandria in 321, and banished from the city "as an atheist." He then travelled widely in Syria and Asia Minor, finding many to take his part, and some of these of great influence; and the whole East was soon aflame with the controversy. He even secured so much support that he was able to return to his work at Alexandria, where he had many followers, but this did not end the trouble. The fires of controversy were now beyond control; and not only bishops but even the common people were quarrelling throughout many of the eastern

provinces to such an extent that the Emperor himself felt compelled to take notice. He sent his personal representative to Alexandria to get the parties to compose their quarrels, but in vain. Nothing remained but to call a general council of the churches throughout the Empire, and submit the case to that for settlement.

The council thus called to settle the questions in dispute in the Arian controversy was known as the Council of Nicæa; and it was of very great importance because up to this time there had been nothing that might be called the authorized doctrine of the Church at large. During the three centuries since Christ, as we have seen, there had been in the Church a wide difference of belief about him. There had been a growing tendency, it is true, to give him an ever higher rank, and a teaching opposed to this tendency might here or there be condemned by some local council; but no standard of belief for the whole Church had as yet been adopted. This was first done at the Council of Nicæa in 325. How this council came about, and what result it had on the doctrines of the Christian Church, we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNCIL OF NICÆA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, TO 381 A. D.

When Constantine, who had lately abandoned paganism for Christianity, became in 323 head of the whole Roman Empire, as its first Christian Emperor, he found that the Christians, on whom he relied for support against his pagan enemies, were divided against themselves throughout the whole East. In his newly founded capital of Constantinople their quarrels were the butt of jokes in the very theaters. He at once perceived that if he were to maintain his power it was of supreme importance that the factions in the Church should be brought into harmony with one another. His first attempts to this end failed, as we saw at the end of the previous chapter. He therefore determined to call together the bishops from all parts of the Empire, that they might agree as to what should be received as the true Christian belief. This gathering was the first General (or Ecumenical) Council, and it met in 325 at Nicæa, a small city in northwestern Asia Minor, some forty-five miles southeast of Constantinople.

Bishops were summoned by imperial command from every part of the Empire, and they were to travel if need be at the Emperor's expense, accompanied by two presbyters and three servants each, and to be his guests. They came with all speed from the remotest parts, until there were over

three hundred bishops present, and a total company of some two thousand. The Emperor himself opened the Council with great pomp, and presided in person over its sessions, which lasted through six weeks. Yet though they were to discuss important matters of Christian belief, there was little calm reasoning over the points at issue, and a Christian spirit of patient forbearance was conspicuously absent. Feeling ran so high that the most abusive language was often used in debate, and sometimes, it is said, even physical violence was used by the members against one another.

The chief purpose of the Council was to settle the bitter controversy as to the true doctrine about Christ, and on this subject there were three distinct views held. A small minority were strict followers of Arius, holding that Christ was in his essential being or nature ("substance") *different* from God. This party was led in the discussions by Arius himself, who though not a bishop had been especially commanded by the Emperor to appear at the Council. A second party, forming a larger minority, was composed of the opponents of Arius; and these held that Christ was of *the same* essential being with God. The recognized leader of these was not their aged Bishop Alexander, but a young deacon in his train, barely twenty-five, very small of stature, far from handsome in appearance, but of keen intellect and fiery temper, violent in argument, passionately devoted to his convictions, and hence narrow and intolerant in spirit.[1] This was Athanasius, whose very name was to become a synonym for unyielding orthodoxy. But the great majority were of a third party, occupying an intermediate position,

[1] He called the Arians by such names as "devils, antichrists, maniacs, Jews, polytheists, atheists, dogs, wolves, lions, hares, chameleons, hydras, eels, cuttlefish, gnats, beetles, and leeches," and no doubt the Arians repaid him measure for measure.

and holding that Christ was of an essential being *similar* to God. The leader of this middle party, who came to be known as Semi-Arians, was Eusebius of Cæsarea, who stood high in influence with the Emperor, and was understood to represent his views.

After some discussion, the Arians, confident of victory, proposed a creed for adoption; but this was at once torn in pieces by an angry mob of their opponents, and from that time on the strictly Arian view received little attention. Eusebius then brought forth a creed representing the views of the middle party, approved by the Emperor, and carefully avoiding terms offensive to either the Arians or their opponents. The Arians were willing to accept it, but this very fact made the Athanasians suspicious, and they absolutely refused to make any concession or compromise. The main point was now discussed between the Semi-Arians and the Athanasians, as to whether Christ's nature was *similar* to God's, or *the same* as God's; and as it narrowed down practically to a controversy over the two corresponding Greek words, *homoi-* and *homo-*, it has been cynically said that the whole Christian Church for half a century, beginning with this Council, fought and was distracted over the smallest letter in the alphabet.

The Emperor, seeing how unyielding the Athanasian party was, realized that no settlement could be reached on middle ground; so apparently thinking peace and harmony in his Empire of greater importance than this doctrine or that, he threw his weight at length on the side of the Athanasians. The latter then presented a creed distinctly opposed to Arian views; the majority soon yielded, though not without some reluctance, to what was pressed as the Emperor's wish; and nearly all of them signed the creed. The Arians at first stood out, but at last all gave in save two;

and these were sent with Arius into exile. Arius's books were condemned to be burnt, possession of them was made a capital crime, and his followers were declared to be enemies of Christianity. This was the first instance in Christian history of subscription being required to a creed, and the first of many tragic instances of the civil government punishing heretics for not accepting the belief of the majority.[1]

The creed thus adopted is known as the Nicene Creed, the most important of the three great creeds [2] of early Christianity, and the only one ever recognized by the whole Christian Church. It did not establish the doctrine of the Trinity, but it took a long step in that direction by permanently settling the disputed question about the deity of Christ, and declaring that he was of the same "substance" with God. This was henceforth the orthodox doctrine, fortified not only by the vote of the Council as the voice of the whole Church, but also by imperial authority as virtually the law of the Empire. It remains the orthodox doctrine throughout all Christendom to this day; but it is instructive to note how it became so—by a majority vote of persons who really preferred another view, but under strong pressure from the Emperor sanctioned this one for the sake of peace and harmony, and to escape the heavy hand of his displeasure.[3] The Creed might of course be true for all that; but had the real convictions of the majority been expressed, the orthodox belief might have been not what it now is, but Arianism, and the one sent into exile, whose books were ordered burnt,

[1] Hitherto heresy had been punished only by excommunication from the Church, but had not been made the concern of the State. Later on it was punished by death, as we shall see all too often.

[2] See Appendix, page 471.

[3] The alternative was to be deposed from office, and banished, as Arius was.

and whose followers were declared enemies of Christianity, might have been not Arius, but Athanasius.

The Council dispersed, and the bishops went their ways; but the great question they had met to decide was settled only in outward appearance. Despite their having signed the Creed to please the Emperor, many of them were "of the same opinion still." Apparently defeated at Nicæa, Arianism, or something like it, was still popular in most of the churches of the East, and was actively promoted by many persons of influence. The Emperor himself began to feel the force of this influence, and to waver. Persuaded by his Arian sister and Eusebius, he recalled Arius from exile in 335 and had him acquitted of heresy; and Arius was on the point of being solemnly reinstated in the Church at Constantinople in the following year, when he suddenly died.

Meantime Athanasius who, young as he was, had been chosen Bishop of Alexandria at Alexander's death in 328, had been carrying things with such a high hand as to rouse the bitterest opposition; so that he himself was banished in 336 as a disturber of the peace of the Church, and out of the forty-six stormy years of his office he spent twenty in exile, being successively banished and recalled no fewer than five times. For the whole question of doctrine was now opened again for discussion. One local council after another met in different parts of the Empire; creed after creed was put forth by one party or the other. After the death of Constantine in 337, political considerations came into the question, and the theology of the churches but reflected the opinions of the Emperor or the court. During most of the time for forty years Arian emperors were on the throne in the East, and Arians persecuted as intolerantly as ever their opponents had done. The West remained steadily orthodox; but in the East a modified form of Arianism became

all but universal under Constantius, Emperor from 337 to 361, and at length he compelled councils in the West virtually to accept that, just as Constantine had forced the Athanasian view upon the Council of Nicæa. Even two of the Popes of Rome were forced for a time to give it a nominal adherence (though with little effect upon the Western Church); and though the Nicene Creed was never abolished by a General Council, Arianism was for some time the officially supported religion of the whole Empire.

It was this very completeness of its victory that brought Arianism to its downfall, for the Arians fell to quarreling among themselves. Under the fanatical Arian Emperor Valens (364–378) the intolerance of the extreme Arians drove the Semi-Arians to side with the orthodox; and when the Emperor Theodosius came to the throne, having been brought up in the orthodox faith, he determined to put an end to these controversies. Upon his baptism in 380 he issued an edict that all nations in the Empire should adhere to the Catholic (that is, the orthodox) religion, believing in the Trinity as an equal deity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. All others he branded as heretics, and threatened them with severe punishment. He expelled the Arians from Constantinople, deprived them of their churches, and forbade them to hold public worship.

The following year, to give his action the sanction of church law, Theodosius called the second General Council, at Constantinople.[1] At this Council a new creed was brought forth which completed the statement of the doc-

[1] This was not in fact a General Council, but only an Eastern one, and it did not in fact *adopt* the Creed referred to. But by about 530 both the Eastern and the Western Church had come to consider this a General Council, and to regard this Creed as its production, to be used henceforth (under the name of the Nicene Creed) in place of that adopted at Nicæa.

trine of the Trinity, by adding an article about the Holy Spirit. This subject had been barely mentioned in the Nicene Creed, but it had now for some time been much discussed, and had come to assume cardinal importance. In the new form of the Creed, therefore, the deity of the Holy Spirit was adopted (not without considerable opposition) as a part of the orthodox doctrine of one God in three persons; and thus the doctrine of the Trinity came to be received as the central doctrine of orthodox Christian belief. It was given further definition in the remarkable document known as the Athanasian Creed.[1]

Thus Arianism was finally outlawed in the Roman Empire. Its downfall was rapid. It was suppressed in the West in 388, and thenceforth survived only among the barbarian nations. For the Goths, the Vandals, the Lombards, and the Burgundians had originally been converted to Arian Christianity, and it did not become extinct among them until late in the sixth century. Individuals here and there may still have held Arian views, but as an organized movement it was no more. Unitarians in modern times have often been called Arians, and have sometimes held Arian views; but they have had no historical connection with the Arians of the fourth century. Unitarians, too, have often felt a sentimental sympathy with these earlier heretics, if only because they were opposed to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Yet if we were compelled to choose between the two to-day, the doctrine of Athanasius should be less objectionable than that of Arius. The latter left too wide a gulf between God and man, and its Christ, being neither God nor man, did nothing to bring the two together. The needs of religion were better served by the view of Athanasius, and it was well for Christianity that that prevailed.

[1] See Appendix, page 473.

But whether either doctrine is adapted to our day, when we do not begin as men then did by taking it for granted that an immense chasm separates the Father in heaven from his children on earth—that is another question, though the discussion of it does not properly belong in a history.

The whole controversy was really one between speculative theologians. The great mass of the people can have had no real understanding of it. They might prefer the doctrine of Athanasius because it seemed to give more honor to Christ than did that of Arius, but the subtle distinctions of the creeds they did not comprehend. The unfortunate result was, and long remained, that Christian doctrines came more and more to be regarded by the people at large as mysteries, not to be understood, nor even inquired into, but simply to be taken on faith, and on the authority of the Church. Men were not supposed to reason about religion. It was this condition of things that in the sixteenth century, when men's minds were becoming emancipated, led to the rise of Unitarianism with its insistent demand for freedom of thought and the use of reason, in religion. There were, however, yet other questions to be settled before the system of orthodox beliefs should be quite complete; and in order to understand the story that is to follow, we shall have in another chapter to glance also at those.

CHAPTER V

THE COMPLETION OF THE ORTHODOX THEOLOGY, TO 451 A. D.

The last chapter showed how the Arian controversy led to two main results. It established the doctrine of the deity of Christ at the Council of Nicæa, and that of the Trinity at Constantinople. It had lasted for over sixty years, and it might well have been hoped that the Church would now have peace. But not so. The accepted Creed left open more questions than it had settled; so that almost immediately a new controversy broke out, which lasted for seventy years more, and not only was thus longer, but also was far more violent, than the previous one. Discussion which in the former period had begun with Christ and ended with God now swung back to Christ again. The new question was as to the relation of the divine and the human natures in him. No authority had yet settled this question, and no one had thought out the answer to it. But every one who wished might guess at it, and it offered an endless field for speculation until some statement should be found which could be generally agreed to. There is no telling how long it might have lasted, had there not been such institutions as General Councils, to decide what opinions must be held as Christian truth, and that whoever holds otherwise is no Christian, but must be put out of the Church, and be punished by the State as his case deserves.

The question disputed about was this: It had always

been taken for granted that Christ had lived upon earth as a human being, and hence had a human nature; and now the Nicene Creed made it necessary also to believe that he was a divine being, and hence had a divine nature. But how could both these apparently contradictory statements be true of one person? Hence the discussion went from one extreme to its opposite, for no middle view seemed possible.

It will be enough for our purpose if we follow simply the brief outlines of the long story. First came Apollinaris, Bishop of Laodicæa in Syria, who was teaching about the time of the Council of Constantinople that Christ's two natures were so much alike as not to be distinguishable: his divine nature was so human, and his human nature was so divine, that there was scarcely any difference between them. But the result of this view was that he did not seem to have been really a human being at all. Apollinaris himself at length withdrew from the Church, and so escaped trial and punishment for heresy, but his doctrine was condemned by various councils.

Some of his followers, continuing his doctrine, drew the conclusion that since Christ was so wholly divine, Mary might be called the Mother of God, and this view was widely accepted. Others thought this to be absurd blasphemy; and in opposition to it Nestorius, who was Metropolitan (chief bishop) of Constantinople from 428, taught that the two natures in Christ were perfectly *distinct*, so that Mary was mother only of the human nature in Christ. The people fancied he was thus denying the Christ they worshiped, and insulted him on the street; while Cyril, Patriarch (chief bishop) of Alexandria, going to the opposite extreme, taught that in Christ the two natures were completely

united; and, wishing for personal reasons to humiliate Nestorius, he used his influence to get the third General Council called, at Ephesus, 431. The bishops on both sides came to it armed as if for battle, and accompanied by a mob of followers; the meetings were turbulent and feeling ran high; but the purpose of the Council was realized, and Christ was declared a little later to be perfect God and perfect man, having two natures united with each other. The teaching of Nestorius was condemned, and he himself was sent into exile, where a few years later he died miserably in some remote part of Egypt. His doctrine nevertheless spread widely in the far East, and a sect of Nestorians still exists among Christians of Armenia and India.

Next came Eutyches, an aged archimandrite (chief abbot) of Constantinople, who, starting with this new orthodox doctrine that in Christ there was a union of two natures, carried it out further by teaching that in this union the human nature was wholly absorbed into the divine; so that he had no human body, but only a divine one; whence it must follow that it was God himself that was born in Bethlehem, suffered, and died on the cross. This extraordinary doctrine, and its teacher, were at once attacked with great violence at Constantinople; and Eutyches was deposed and his doctrine condemned at a local council. But he had powerful friends at court, so that the next year a fourth General Council was called in his behalf at Ephesus, 449; where, under the threats and coercion of the Emperor, his doctrine was actually approved as orthodox, and even Pope Leo of Rome, who had opposed him, was excommunicated for doing so. What manner of Council this was, however, and how much its opinion on a point of Christian doctrine was worth, may be judged from the fact that in the process

of the discussion one of the bishops is said to have been beaten and kicked so that he died, and that it has ever since been known as "the Robber Council."

A reaction now came. A new Emperor soon afterwards came to the throne, and in his first year he called a fifth General Council, at Chalcedon, across the Bosporus from Constantinople, 451. This was the last of the great Councils to settle the main lines of doctrine in the early Church, and it was the most important of all save Nicæa. It was attended by five or six hundred bishops, and as usual in these Councils it was full of tumult and disorder; but, forced again by threats from the Emperor, it took three important actions. It annulled the actions of the Robber Council; it re-affirmed the Nicene Creed as revised at the Council of Constantinople; and it settled permanently the long-standing controversy as to the two natures in Christ. The way in which it contrived to do this is highly interesting. Some had been saying, as we have seen, that Christ had two separate natures, and others had been saying that he had but one nature. Now the Council of Chalcedon got rid of this contradiction by simply saying these two opposite things in one breath, only, in the second case it substituted for the word *nature* the word *person*.[1] It declared that Christ had two distinct natures, and that these were both united in one person, thus making him a God-Man, both divine and human. The Emperor then embodied this doctrine in a law, and ordered all Eutychians banished from the Empire; and the Emperor Justinian a century later ratified and included in his Code of Roman Law the decrees of the four General Councils. This doctrine about the person of Christ, sup-

[1] It could do this the more easily, since the two words in Greek originally meant practically the same thing, and had been used interchangeably.

plementing that of the Trinity, was also included in the Athanasian Creed,[1] and has been generally accepted by orthodox Protestantism.

Even now the question would not down. There were still those who insisted that Christ had but one nature, and were consequently named Monophysites. Their contentions distracted the Eastern Church for over a century more, and they exist even to-day as a separate sect in Syria, Armenia, and Egypt; as do also the Monothelites, so called because they insisted, a century later, that though Christ had two natures he had but one will. But these heresies were both duly condemned, and the echoes of the controversy at last died away.

Thus the orthodox theology as to God and Christ was completed. See now, in review, by what gradual steps its doctrines grew up.

1. The first three Gospels make Jesus the Messiah, but a man.

2. Paul makes Jesus a man, but one raised up by God to a unique position in the universe.

3. The Gospel of John makes Christ the *Logos*, subordinate to God, yet somehow sharing his divinity.

4. The Fathers of the second and third centuries waver between the simple humanity and the complete divinity of Christ.

5. The Council of Nicæa makes Christ of the same essential nature with God.

6. The Council of Constantinople unites Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one Trinity.

7. The Council of Ephesus makes Christ's two natures not distinct but united.

[1] The second part, beginning with Article 29. See Appendix, page 473.

8. The Council of Chalcedon makes these two natures united in one person.

The orthodox doctrine, then, against which Unitarianism was to protest, was, in brief, this: *that the one God exists in three persons, and that one of these persons has two natures.*

The whole controversy which we have been following, and which convulsed the growing Christian Church religiously, and the declining Roman Empire politically, for over a hundred and thirty years, may seem to us now to have been a controversy not about living realities, but about mere words; and the solutions reached at Nicæa and Chalcedon may seem to us to have been mere verbal solutions, which leave the question after all pretty much where it was at the start. We must not forget, however, that to many Christians of the third and fourth centuries these seemed supremely vital matters, involving the very essence, and even the permanent existence, of their Christian faith; for all this struggle had also its deep religious side, and expressed an earnest and sincere purpose in many hearts.

The character and methods of the Councils that established these doctrines are not, it is true, calculated to give us great reverence for their Christian character, nor much respect for their opinions; while the repeated interference of the civil power to enforce decisions of doctrine in its own interest was as vicious as it well could be. Yet the changes of thought that we have noted do not quite deserve to be called, as they often have been, "corruptions of Christianity." No one tried, or wished, to "corrupt" the Christian faith. It was, indeed, a vast change from the simple religion of the sermon on the mount and the parables of Jesus to the theology of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds;

and the whole emphasis shifted from a religion of the heart and life to abstract speculations of the head. Yet when we have made all deductions for the political intrigues and the mean jealousies and the unscrupulous ambitions that so often accompanied them, we find at the bottom of these controversies an earnest and honest desire in the best minds to state the theory of the new Christian religion in terms which the cultured old world of Greek thought could accept. For at the beginning of the fourth century the Christian Church was in grave danger of falling to pieces unless it could establish a place for itself in Greek civilization, which still did the world's thinking; and the movement we have been following probably saved Christianity for the Greek and Roman world.

The development of the doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ must therefore have a profound interest for every one that follows the history of the Christian Church in the days of its struggling young life. Small wonder that after this life-and-death struggle over them these doctrines should have been guarded as the very soul of Christian faith, so that whoever doubted or denied them seemed to be striking at the heart not merely of Christian orthodoxy, but even of all religion, and to be little if any better than an atheist. This feeling became deeply rooted in the minds of Christians the world over; and it was intensified by laws which made heresy a terrible crime. It will help us to understand why in later times those who, after comparing the Creeds with their New Testaments, came to prefer the simple belief in the unity of God and the humanity of Christ to the mysteries of the Trinity and the God-Man, were looked on as deadly enemies of Christianity, and as deserving of the most extreme punishment. It will give a clue to the current of

persecution which flows through almost the whole history of Unitarianism, and makes it tragic with the sufferings of confessors and the blood of martyrs.

Before closing this chapter we should briefly mention three other doctrines that presently took form, which Unitarianism also came to oppose. First, the doctrine worked out by Augustine, and later adopted by Calvin, that man even from infancy has a nature totally depraved by sin. Second, the doctrine, also from Augustine and emphasized by Calvin, that God from the beginning chose (by "election," or "predestination") certain souls to be saved, and others to be lost. Third, the doctrine that Jesus, by a "vicarious atonement," saved men by suffering in their stead, as their substitute. It was against the two great central doctrines of orthodox theology, together with these three minor ones, that the pioneers of Unitarianism raised their protest, as inconsistent with Scripture, and offensive to reason or the moral sense.

The Unitarian movement, as we saw in the first chapter, does not really begin till the time of the Protestant Reformation; but it continually harks back to the simple faith of primitive Christianity, and continually protests against the central doctrines of the orthodox Creeds. We should only half understand the reason and meaning of these protests if we had not seen why and how these Creeds came into being, what they are, and what they mean. Now that we have done that, we are prepared to start where the first Unitarian reformers started, and to follow the whole story of the movement they began, with a clear understanding of their task, and of their aims in pursuing it.

DIVISION II

SCATTERED PIONEERS OF UNITARIANISM IN EUROPE

CHAPTER VI

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MODERN UNITARIANISM, 1517–1530

In the previous chapters we have seen how the system of orthodox theology gradually grew up, and how by the decrees of church Councils and of Emperors its beliefs were so fastened upon Christians that denial of them was declared a heresy, and was punished as a crime. If at rare intervals heretics were rash enough to raise their voices and call in question an old doctrine, or proclaim a new one, they were soon put to silence. By this means Christian thought was kept nearly stagnant for over a thousand years.

Early in the sixteenth century, however, various influences were conspiring to bring about great changes in men's religious views. In the first place, Constantinople, capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, had fallen into the hands of the Turks in 1453, and the Christian scholars living there had scattered over western Europe, bringing with them, especially to Italy, manuscripts of classical authors long forgotten during the Dark Ages in the West. A whole new library of the world's greatest literature was thus suddenly thrown open to educated men. Hence arose the movement variously called the Revival of Learning, or the Renaissance, or Humanism, which sprang up and brought forth in Europe the beginnings of modern literature, modern art, modern science, and modern tendencies in govern-

ment. In the second place, the invention of printing about the middle of the fifteenth century made it possible for new ideas to spread as they had never spread before, and above all for men everywhere for the first time to read the Bible for themselves. Finally, the discovery of a New World in 1492, and of a new route to the Indies soon after, expanded the world's horizon to a degree hitherto undreamed of, and never to be possible again. The result of such influences as these was that men were no longer so well content as before to live in a limited world, and to think only the thoughts that had been handed down to them from past ages. Instead, they began to think for themselves, and to venture out into fields of thought hitherto forbidden to them.

In the religious world these new influences caused perhaps even a greater ferment of thought than elsewhere; and this at length came to a head in 1517 when the Catholic monk, Martin Luther, posted his ninety-five theses on the church door at Wittenberg, and thus began the Protestant Reformation. For it must be remembered that up to this time the existing Church everywhere in western Europe was the Roman Catholic Church, and that the doctrines everywhere taught were Catholic doctrines. Nevertheless, when the Reformation began, it was the farthest from the thoughts of Luther and those that sympathized with him to form a new Protestant Church, separate from the Catholic Church, and even hostile to it. They desired simply to bring about a reform of certain flagrant abuses and corrupt practices, so that the Church might be purer in the character of its clergy, and might better meet the religious needs of the people at large. Least of all had they any intention of trying to reform the doctrines of Christianity as those were defined in the great Creeds. Melanchthon, who soon became the

great theologian of the Reformation in Germany, spoke for Protestants in general when he said, "We do not differ from the Roman Church on any point of doctrine."

When, however, Protestants had once thrown off the authority of the Catholic Church in other matters, there was every likelihood that they would soon begin to examine into the truth of the doctrines they had received from it; and that all the more, since they were coming gradually to regard the Bible, instead of the Church, as the supreme authority in all matters of religion. In fact, as soon as they began to compare the doctrines of the Creeds with the teachings of the Bible, most of the leading reformers at first showed signs of a wavering belief in the Catholic doctrines of the Trinity and the Deity of Christ. The foundations for such distrust had been laid even before the Reformation by Erasmus of Rotterdam, the most famous biblical scholar of his age, a man who, though he gave strong impulse to the Reformation, yet himself never left the Catholic Church. In his edition of the Greek New Testament, published in 1516, he omitted as an interpolation the text which had long been appealed to as the strongest scriptural proof of the doctrine of the Trinity,[1] and by this and his notes on the New Testament went far to undermine belief in that doctrine for those who took the Bible for their sole authority. For this he was long appealed to by Antitrinitarians, reproached by orthodox Protestants, and considered an Arian [2] or an Antitrinitarian by Catholics.

Luther himself heartily disliked the word Trinity and other terms used in the Creeds in speaking of that doctrine, because they were not found in the Scriptures, but were only

[1] I John 5:7. Compare the Revised Version with the Authorized, noting the omission.

[2] See page 17,

human inventions. He accordingly left them out of his Catechisms, and omitted the invocation of the Trinity from his litany, and declared that he much preferred to say God rather than Trinity, which had a frigid sound. Catholic writers therefore did not hesitate to call him an Arian.

Melanchthon, too, in the first work which he published on the doctrines of the reformers, instead of treating the doctrine of the Trinity as the very center of the Christian faith, passed it by with scarcely a comment, as a mystery which it was not necessary for a Christian to understand; and he also was charged with Arianism.

Even Calvin, who later on, as leader of the Reformation in Geneva, was to cause Servetus to be burned at the stake for denying the doctrine of the Trinity, declared earlier in his career that the Nicene Creed was better suited to be sung as a song than to be used as an expression of faith; while he also expressed disapproval of the Athanasian Creed and dislike of the commonly used prayer to the Holy Trinity, and in his Catechism touched upon the doctrine very lightly. He had in his turn to defend himself against the charge of Arianism and Sabellianism.[1] Much the same might be said with regard to the views of other leaders of the Reformation: Zwingli at Zürich, Farel at Geneva, and Œcolampadius at Basel.

Now all this does not in the least mean that the chief leaders of Protestantism were at first more than half Unitarian in belief, or that they deserved the charge of heresy which their opponents flung at them, and which they with one accord denied; but it does mean that they were at least doubtful whether these doctrines of the Catholic faith could be found in the Bible, and whether they should be accepted as an essential part of Protestant belief. It is therefore

[1] See page 15.

quite possible that if nothing had occurred to disturb the quiet development of their thought, these doctrines might within a generation or two have come to be quietly ignored as not important to Christian faith, and might at length have been discarded outright as mere inventions of men. Instead of this happening, however, it came to pass that when the reformers of Germany and Switzerland came at length to decide what statements of the Protestant belief they should adopt in their new Confessions, they kept as many as possible of the old Catholic doctrines, and especially emphasized their adherence to the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

Now, why and how did this result come about, leaving to Protestantism a system of belief of which one part was based upon the authority of Scripture, while the other was simply taken over from the tradition of the Catholic Church? There were two principal reasons. In the first place, those who first proclaimed beliefs which led in the direction of Unitarianism were leaders in the sect of the Anabaptists, and these beliefs were thus unfortunately associated, as we shall see in the next chapter, with certain extravagant and fanatical tendencies in that sect, which seemed to threaten the overthrow of all social and religious order. The fate of the Reformation still hung in the balance; and the reformers could not afford to take any risks by tolerating a movement which, on account of its radical social tendencies, would be certain to alienate the sympathy of the princes who had thus far supported it; for if these were now to abandon it, it must inevitably fail. Hence the reformers had to remain on conservative ground, and they therefore opposed the Anabaptists and tried to silence their leaders.

In the second place, Servetus, the first writer to attract

much attention in Europe by his writings against the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, instead of gently and subtly undermining it, brought fresh and severe criticism upon Protestantism by the sharpness of his attacks upon what had for a millennium been considered the most sacred dogma of the Christian religion, and he so shocked and angered the reformers themselves that they recoiled from him in horror. But for this reason also, they might perhaps have gradually gone on from their early misgivings about the doctrine until they had left it far behind. As it was, being forced to choose at once between seeming to approve of Servetus and his positions, and remaining on the perfectly safe ground of the old doctrines, they naturally enough did the latter, and with one consent disowned Servetus and denounced his teaching. How this result came about in this twofold way, we shall see in the next following chapters.

CHAPTER VII

ANTITRINITARIANISM AMONG THE EARLY ANABAPTISTS, 1517–1530

We have now to trace through several chapters the story of how, during the half-century after the beginning of the Reformation, Christians who could not accept the orthodox doctrines about the Trinity and the person of Christ tried in various parts of western Europe to proclaim views more or less Unitarian, only sooner or later to be met in each case by excommunication from the Church, banishment from home, imprisonment, or even death itself, until at length countries were found whose laws allowed them freedom of conscience, and thus made it possible for them to worship God after their own manner and to organize churches of their own.

The first of those to adopt and teach these views were found in what is known as the Anabaptist movement. This movement was one which, though it had some able and educated leaders, found its chief following among the humbler classes of society. It was in fact a loose fusion of two quite different elements: a popular religious movement of devout and earnest souls whose spiritual ancestry went back of the Reformation to circles of pious mystics and humble Christians in the bosom of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, out of which had come such devout classics as the *Imitation of Christ;* and along with this, a popular social movement among the peasantry, whose sense of the wrongs

and oppressions they had long suffered had been stirred up anew by the Reformation, and who looked for a reformed religion to bring them a reformed social order. Both religiously and socially they were the radicals of the Protestant Reformation.

The Anabaptist movement took its rise in 1525 at Zürich, as the radical wing of the Swiss Reformation which had begun there under the leadership of Zwingli; but it soon got beyond control, and it ran into such extravagances that some of its leaders were put to death, and others with their followers were banished. Yet the movement seemed somehow to answer a strong religious and social demand, and in spite of persecutions, and of an edict of the Diet of Speyer in 1529 that every Anabaptist should be put to death, it soon spread like wild-fire over large parts of Western Europe; and in our story we shall meet it in Western Germany, Holland, Italy, Switzerland, Moravia, Poland, Transylvania, and England. These Anabaptists embraced a wide variety of teachings, differing according to their leader or the locality; but the one thing which was common to them all, and which seemed most sharply to distinguish them from other Protestants, was their objection to infant baptism, and their insistence that upon reaching adult Christian life persons who had been baptized in infancy should be baptized again. Hence the name given them by their opponents, *Ana*-baptists (i. e., *re*-baptizers); although this name was ere long applied, in more or less reproach, to religious radicals of the period, in general, without much regard to their particular beliefs as to baptism.

Their interest in the question of baptism, however, was only incidental. Their first concern was in the establishment of a pure Church, reformed from the ground up by its strict adherence in every particular to the teachings of

Scripture, which they accepted literally and tried faithfully to follow. Thus they believed that followers of Christ should not resist evil, nor bear arms, nor own private property, nor hold civil office, nor resort to law courts, nor take oaths; and their movement was largely a lay movement. In these respects they might be called the Quakers of their time; and indeed the Quakers of England were not a little influenced by their teaching and example. They also believed in separation of Church and State, and stood firmly for freedom of conscience and against religious persecution. In their view of religious knowledge they were mystics, holding that God makes his truth and will known to the souls of men directly, and they relied much upon the guidance of the Spirit; but though they were in the main people of most exemplary lives, they would sometimes ascribe to the influence of the divine Spirit impulses which seemed to others to have a very human origin, and thus in the name of religion some of them ran into gross immorality.

Instead, however, of having the backing of the civil power, as the Lutherans did, the Anabaptists were generally opposed by it; unfortunately they had no leader like Luther powerful enough to guide their movement and hold it in control; and they were far too loosely organized to be able to control their own members. The result was that a movement which had in it much that was good was at length wrecked by the excesses of its wilder adherents. At Münster, where it was especially strong, it took a revolutionary form; and such civil disorder ensued and such fanaticism ruled that the whole movement had in 1535 to be suppressed with terrible bloodshed. Now disturbances such as these tended to bring the whole Protestant movement into ill repute, and the leaders of the Reformation reacted in alarm and disgust. The Anabaptists were therefore more bitterly

hated and more harshly persecuted than were the members of any other religious movement during the sixteenth century; and it is said that by 1546 no fewer than 30,000 of them had been put to death in Holland and Friesland. The remnants of them that survived persecution were at length gathered into a more compact body with sober leadership; and of these sprang the Mennonites of Holland, and the Baptists of England and America.

Our reason for being interested in the Anabaptists in this history is that, though the majority of them remained orthodox on the main doctrines of the Creeds, some of their most distinguished leaders became decidedly liberal, and instead of stopping where Luther stopped, went on to reject doctrines, like that of the Trinity, which were not taught in the Scriptures. Since these were the earliest pioneers of Unitarianism in Europe, it will be worth while to glance at the career of a few of them and see what they believed, and what became of them and their doctrine.

Martin Cellarius (or Borrhäus) deserves to be remembered because he is said to have been the first Protestant openly to proclaim antitrinitarian beliefs. He was born at Stuttgart in 1499, was liberally educated, and became a friend of Melanchthon. While leading the life of a teacher in Germany he early in life became an Anabaptist, and for this he suffered imprisonment in Prussia. He published in 1527 a book, *On the Works of God*, in which he taught that Jesus was God only in the sense in which we may all be gods—by being filled with God's spirit. For spreading this and other heretical views, he was obliged in 1536, after his release from prison, to flee to Switzerland; but there he became professor at the University of Basel, and was permitted to live in peace until his death of the plague in 1564.

The most important of all the antitrinitarian Anabaptists was Hans Denck, who has been called one of the profoundest thinkers of the sixteenth century. Born in Bavaria about 1495, he became famous as an accomplished Hebrew and classical scholar, and was appointed rector of a celebrated school at Nuremberg; but for having become an Anabaptist he was after a year deprived of his office and ordered in 1524 to leave the city before nightfall. From a book which he published later it is clear that he was far from accepting the usual orthodox teaching as to the Trinity, for he gave the doctrine a mystical sort of explanation which altogether changed its established meaning; and he was also unorthodox as to the atonement, and the eternal punishment of the wicked. For some years after his banishment he lived the life of a wandering preacher, persecuted for his faith and driven from city to city, till at last he found a brief refuge at Basel, where he was carried off by the plague in 1527.

A third Anabaptist Antitrinitarian was Johannes Campanus, who was born near the border between Belgium and Germany. He was a scholar, and for a time he enjoyed the friendship of Luther and Melanchthon; but he became more or less influenced by Anabaptist tendencies, and fell under suspicion on account of his utterances as to the Trinity. After suffering imprisonment and other persecution for attempting to win converts to his views by preaching, he determined to spread them in a book, which he issued about 1531 "in opposition to the whole world since the Apostles," of which the gentle Melanchthon said that its author deserved to be hanged. In this and another work he strove to expose and correct the corruptions of Christian doctrine, and to restore the pure teaching of primitive Christianity. He taught that only two persons are divine,

the Father and the Son, that the Son is inferior to the Father, and that the Spirit is not a person, but a divine power. For stirring up the peasants he was arrested about 1553, and is said to have been imprisoned at Kleve for some twenty-six years.

Perhaps the most extraordinary career of all was that of David Joris, who was born in Flanders or Holland in 1501. He was brought up the son of a traveling mountebank, and was quite without education. Having become an Anabaptist preacher he said he was a prophet, and showed an extraordinary power of attracting devoted personal followers. While much of a fanatic, he was withal a man of keen mind, and was the author of nearly three hundred works, of which the most important was entitled *The Wonderbook*. He taught that the doctrine of the Trinity tends only to obscure our knowledge of God, in whose being there is no distinction of persons. For nearly ten years he traveled about Holland and adjoining parts of Germany and gathered many followers, though often obliged to go in disguise in order to avoid the persecutions that continued to follow him and them, in the course of which his mother was put to death, and he himself had numerous hair-breadth escapes. At length he resolved to go beyond the reach of his persecutors, and in some distant land to wait in peace for the second coming of Christ, which he fervently expected to live to witness. After traveling as far as Venice in search of a place, he returned to Switzerland and with a few trusted friends settled in 1544 at Basel, under the assumed name of Jan van Brugge. He was admitted to citizenship, joined the Reformed Church, purchased an estate, and lived in grand style out of the wealth which his followers had entrusted to him, was bountiful to the poor, and was held in great respect for his irreproachable life until 1556 when he

died, having all along kept up a secret correspondence with his Anabaptist followers in Holland.

Then followed one of those droll humors which sometimes enliven the page of religious history. Three years later the real identity of Jan van Brugge was discovered. The pious citizens of Basel were scandalized beyond measure. Little could now be done to mend matters, but that little was done in the most thorough manner. In accordance with an old mediæval custom a formal trial was instituted against the deceased. The theological faculty of the University investigated the case of David Joris and pronounced him guilty of the most blasphemous heresies; whereupon the authorities passed sentence of burning upon the heretic. His grave was opened, and his body was exhibited to the spectators, and was then, along with all his books and his portrait, publicly burnt by the common hangman, after which his family were required to do penance in the cathedral. Thus the serious reproach of having entertained a heretic unawares was at length removed from the consciences of the worthy Basileans.

It will be necessary to do little more than mention the names of three others who are classed among the Anabaptists, and of whom indeed little is known save their fate. Jakob Kautz, a young preacher of Bockenheim, who denied the doctrine of eternal punishment and zealously defended at Worms the views of Denck, was imprisoned at Strassburg in 1528, and then banished. In 1530 at Basel, Conradin Bassen, who had denied the deity of Christ, was beheaded and his head was set up on a pole. For similar errors Michael Sattler, who had been leader of Anabaptist churches in Switzerland, after having his tongue cut out and pieces of flesh torn from his body, was burned at the stake at Rothenburg on the Neckar, in 1527.

It should not be inferred that these Anabaptist heretics are to be closely identified with Unitarianism, in the modern sense of that term. For while it is true that they were all more or less unsound as to the Trinity and their views of Christ, yet they were also all more or less full of vagaries with which Unitarians have had little sympathy. Moreover, the two are radically different as to temper of mind. The Anabaptists were in their religious temperament mystics, relying implicitly upon some inner light for religious guidance, and were therefore always in danger of running into fanaticism; whereas Unitarianism has throughout its history been marked by its faith in the calmer guidance of reason, and if sometimes cold, has at all events always remained sane.

The important point to note about the Anabaptists in connection with this history is that these radicals of the early Reformation, springing from widely separated places in Protestant Europe, bear witness to a widespread dissatisfaction with the Catholic doctrines about God and Christ, and illustrate many different attempts (for no two of them thought alike) to arrive at beliefs more in harmony with Scripture, and more acceptable to reason, than were the doctrines of the creeds. Having to bear, however, the double weight of heresy and fanaticism, they were foredoomed to failure. Unitarian thought had to wait for saner teachers, more sober leaders, and freer laws, before it could become organized and hope to spread. If this tendency of thought was thus crushed in Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, the liberalizing influence of the Anabaptist movement had meanwhile spread to other lands; and we shall later see how in Italy, Poland, England, and even in Holland itself, it was among Anabaptists that Unitarian thought first arose.

Meantime what the development of a more liberal theology most needed was a spokesman, who was not handicapped from the start by association with a discredited movement, and who, instead of joining his attacks upon the doctrine of the Trinity with various other speculations, should win more pointed attention by concentrating his attacks upon that doctrine alone. Such a leader appeared in the person of Servetus, to whom we must next turn.

CHAPTER VIII

MICHAEL SERVETUS: EARLY LIFE, 1511–1532

In a previous chapter we saw that the leaders of the Protestant Reformation, noting the fact that the teaching of the Catholic Creeds as to the Trinity and the two natures in Christ was not to be found in Scripture, seemed at first half inclined, if not quite yet to deny those doctrines outright, at all events to pass them by without emphasis, as doctrines not necessary to salvation. We next saw how some of the Anabaptist leaders who were so bold as to deny those doctrines, brought their own views on these matters into the greater disrepute through the extravagance of their movement in other directions. Now if the case had been dropped here, it might have been long before Antitrinitarian views would have asserted themselves in Protestantism; but we have now to turn to a man who arose just when the Anabaptist heretics had been pretty well put to silence, and forced the question upon the attention of the Reformers more insistently and sharply than ever. This man was a Spanish Catholic named Michael Servetus.[1] He was in more than one respect one of the most remarkable men of the sixteenth century; while the tragic death which he suffered made him the first and most conspicuous martyr to the faith whose history we are following.

[1] This is the Latin form of his name, and the one commonly used. His full name in its correct Spanish form was Miguel Serveto alias Reves. Other forms often met with rest upon error or mistaken conjecture.

Though our records of the life of Servetus are scanty and inconsistent, and the gaps in them have often been filled up by conjectures which have later proved to be mistaken, it seems most likely that he was born in 1511 at Tudela, a small city in Navarre, and that in his infancy his parents removed to Villanueva in Aragon, where his father had received an appointment as royal Notary, an office of some distinction, and where the family lived in handsome style. His parents were devoted Catholics, and it is thought that he may at first have been designed for the priesthood. Little is known to a certainty about his early education, but he seems to have been a precocious youth, and early in his teens to have acquired a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and to have become well versed in mathematics and the scholastic philosophy.

There was much going on in Spain at this period to make a serious-minded youth thoughtful about questions of religion. Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic were on the throne, determined to secure political unity in their new nation by compelling religious uniformity; and a spirit of the most intolerant orthodoxy controlled the government. In 1492, for refusing to deny the faith of their fathers and profess Christianity, 800,000 Jews had been banished from the kingdom. In the same year the Moors had been overthrown in Granada, and although for a few years they were granted toleration, they were soon compelled to choose between abandoning their Mohammedanism and being driven from Spain. In both cases it was the dogma of the Trinity that proved the insurmountable obstacle for races which held as the first article of their faith the undivided unity of God. Within the generation including Servetus's boyhood, some 20,000 victims, Jewish or Mohammedan, were thus burned at the stake. Despite the resistance of the

liberty-loving Aragonians, the Inquisition was set up among them to root out heresy; and these things must all have made a deep impression upon the mind of the young Servetus, and may well have laid the foundation for the main passion of his life.

Whatever may have been intended for him before, when Servetus was seventeen his father determined that he should enter the law, and to that end sent him across the Pyrenees to the University of Toulouse, then the most celebrated in France. Here he made a most wonderful discovery. For the first time in his life he found a Bible to read.[1] He simply devoured it. It seemed to him as though it were a book fallen into his hands from heaven, containing the sum of all philosophy and all science, and it made upon him a profound impression which lasted as long as he lived. For hitherto he had been taught to believe that the dogma of the Trinity was the very center of the Christian religion, and he knew that for refusing to accept it thousands in his own land had recently been put to death. Despite all this, the doctrine as taught in the schools had seemed to him but a dead thing, yielding no inspiration for his religious life, and used chiefly as a subject of hair-splitting debates between scholastic theologians. Now to his surprise and infinite relief he found in the Bible nothing of all this, but instead the most wonderful religious book in all the world, full of life, and revealing to him as a vivid reality the great, loving heart of Christ. The more he read it, the more he was inspired by it, and the more he became convinced that not only for Jews and Mohammedans but for all men the doctrine of the Trinity as then

[1] Luther also at the age of eighteen saw a Bible for the first time at the University of Erfurt, and left the study of the law for the service of the Church.

taught in the Church was the greatest stumbling-block. For the masses of the people could never comprehend it, and even the teachers themselves seemed not to understand it. His mind was made up. He would devote his life to exposing the errors in this doctrine, and to showing men what was the true teaching of the Bible about God and Christ. He was as yet but eighteen years old!

The study of the law had by now lost any attraction it may ever have had for him, and after about a year at the University he left it for the service of the friar Juan de Quintana, soon to become confessor to the young Emperor, Charles V. He followed his master to court, and never saw his parents or his native land again. Thus it happened that as one of the Emperor's suite Servetus was early in 1530 present at Bologna, where Charles, though he had long since been crowned Emperor in Germany, was now to receive from Pope Clement VII a religious coronation with both the iron crown of Lombardy and the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, amid scenes of the most riotous luxury and extravagance that the modern world had ever known. Here Servetus received a second profound impression upon his religious experience, calculated by sharp contrast to emphasize that made by his recent discovery of the Bible. For on the one hand he saw the Pope bowed down to by the earth's mightiest as little less than a god, and this filled him with a revulsion from which he never recovered;[1] while on the other hand, behind the scenes, he saw among

[1] Over twenty years afterwards, in the last year of his life, his indignation and disgust still boil over as he writes, "With these very eyes I saw him borne with pomp on the shoulders of princes, and in the public streets adored by the whole people kneeling, to such a point that those that succeeded even in kissing his feet or his shoes deemed themselves happy beyond the rest. Oh, beast of beasts the most wicked! Most shameless of harlots!"

the highest dignitaries of the Church sickening evidences of wordliness, selfish ambition, cynical skepticism, and unconcealed immorality. Henceforth the official religion of the Church seemed to him but a hollow mockery, and the Pope became for him the very Antichrist predicted in the New Testament.

From Bologna the Emperor proceeded to Germany to attend the famous Diet of Augsburg, where Protestantism was to receive political recognition under the Empire, and where Melanchthon was to offer for the Emperor's approval the Augsburg Confession as a statement of the Protestant doctrines. Servetus followed in the Emperor's suite. He had no doubt already seen some of the writings of Melanchthon, and perhaps also of others of the reformers; and he must have been eager to see and hear men who, like himself, had at heart the great cause of purifying the Church. Although with his position in the service of the man who had the Emperor's closest confidence, and with his own talents, he had the most enviable opportunity for worldly advancement, the only thing that now really interested him was to reform the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. He evidently saw little chance of accomplishing anything in this direction in Catholic circles, and so he gave up all his worldly prospects, left Quintana's service, and went to seek the leaders of Protestantism. For although the Augsburg Confession had just declared that Protestants accepted the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the Protestant Churches had not yet adopted a permanent creed of their own; and he felt that if he could only get the chance to lay his views before the leaders of Protestant thought, he could surely get them to see the doctrine of the Trinity as he saw it.

Servetus accordingly went in the autumn of 1530 to Basel, and sought repeated interviews with Œcolampadius, the

leader of the Reformation in that city. Though Servetus was but a youth of nineteen, a foreigner and a Catholic, and Œcolampadius was far more than twice his age, a distinguished man busy with important affairs, yet he received Servetus for some time patiently, and though scandalized by the views he expressed tried to convince him of his errors. Before long he found Servetus so conceited, so obstinate in his opinions, and so much more bent on pressing his own views than upon humbly seeking to learn the truth, that he lost patience; and when Servetus complained because Œcolampadius would no longer listen to him, the latter wrote in reply, "I have more reason for complaint than you. You thrust yourself upon me as if I had nothing to do but answer your questions." Servetus therefore, after having failed to get an interview with Erasmus who was then living at Basel, next went to Strassburg to see what he might accomplish with the reformers there.

Now Strassburg was at that time the most liberal of the Protestant cities. Denck and other Anabaptists had been there but a few years before, and their influence was still felt. Bucer (Butzer) and Capito, the Strassburg reformers, received Servetus most kindly, and as they seemed at first to feel some sympathy for his views, he began to hope that here at last they would be adopted. But Zwingli, the founder and leader of the Swiss Reformation, who had already been told of Servetus's heretical opinions, had warned the other reformers against these dreadful blasphemies as he considered them, lest they spread and bring incalculable harm upon the Protestant cause. So that in the end Servetus made no better progress here than at Basel.

It may seem almost incredible that a youth of nineteen should have had the effrontery thus to approach the acknowledged leaders of Protestant thought, men more than

twice his age, and to assume to set them right as to the very first and most important article of their faith; but, as he later declared, he felt moved in this matter by a divine impulse, as though he had a fresh revelation from God to communicate. If he could but once get his views fairly before men's minds, they would be sure to be accepted; and then the whole world could easily be won to the Christian faith. Nothing daunted therefore, and without trying to travel further and attempt to win over Melanchthon or Luther, he now resolved upon another course. He would put his views into print where every one might see them. Even this was not so easily managed. At Basel, the publishing center of northern Europe, the printer would not take the risk of publishing his manuscript; but after a little while one was found elsewhere who would print the book, though he dared not put his name and place on the title-page. Servetus, however, had no such misgivings, but was so confident in his cause that he boldly printed his own name as author.

Thus was issued in the summer of 1531, at Hagenau in Alsace, a little book which was destined to start a profound revolution in the religious world. It was entitled *On the Errors of the Trinity.*[1] It was written in rather crude Latin, with thoughts not too well digested or arranged, though its main intention is clear enough, and it shows a remarkable range of reading for a youth. It was put on sale in the Rhine cities, and its influence soon spread far and wide through Switzerland and Germany and into northern Italy; and wherever it was read it won marked attention. Servetus seems naïvely still to have expected that the re-

[1] De Trinitatis Erroribus libri septem. Per Michaelem Serveto, alias Reves, ab Aragonia Hispanum. Anno MDXXXI. pp. 238, small 8°.

formers would actually welcome his contribution to their cause as soon as they took time to reflect on what he had to say; but instead they were thrown into the greatest consternation by it. Melanchthon, it is true, admitted that he was reading it a good deal; and he and Œcolampadius agreed that it contained many good points; but any slight praise was soon drowned by the general chorus of denunciation. To Luther it seemed "an abominably wicked book"; Melanchthon foresaw (correctly enough, as the event proved) great tragedies resulting from it; Œcolampadius saw the whole Reformation imperiled by this new Hydra, if he were tolerated, since the Emperor would hold the Protestant churches responsible for these odious blasphemies; Bucer said from his pulpit that the author deserved to be drawn and quartered; [1] and the vocabulary in general was exhausted for offensive epithets to heap upon him. It was charged that he must have gone to Africa and learned his doctrine from the Moors, and that he was in secret league with the Grand Turk who was just then threatening to conquer Christian Europe. As soon as the character of the book became generally known the sale of it was forbidden at Basel and Strassburg; and when it was brought next year to the notice of Quintana, to his infinite chagrin that it should have been written by one who had been his protégé, he had "that most pestilent book" at once prohibited throughout the Empire. So thoroughly was it suppressed that some twenty years later, when a copy was eagerly wanted at Geneva in the trial of Servetus for heresy, not one could be found.

At the request of Œcolampadius, Bucer wrote a refutation of Servetus's book (which, however, he never ventured

[1] So Calvin wrote in 1553, long afterwards; but the authenticity of this statement is much doubted.

to publish), and he warned him that though he would not himself do him the least harm, the magistrate would no longer suffer him to stay at Strassburg, nor would he himself intercede with the magistrate in Servetus's behalf. Servetus therefore returned to Basel, where he had previously made at least a partial living by giving language lessons; and he brought with him a part of the edition of his book to dispose of there or to send on to the book fair at Lyon. Here too he found the feeling against him so intense that he scarcely knew what to expect next. Accordingly he wrote to Œcolampadius offering to leave town if it were thought best, but also saying that he was willing to publish a retraction of what he had written. Indulgence was given him, and the result was that the following spring he brought out another and smaller book, entitled *Dialogues on the Trinity;* for the dialogue was at that time a favorite form for discussing subjects of every sort.

This new work was hastily and carelessly done, but it was ostensibly meant to correct the errors and imperfections of the former book which, he said, were due partly to his own lack of skill, and partly to the carelessness of the printer. It was in fact intended only to strengthen his former arguments by meeting the objections which the reformers had raised against them; and he prided himself that they had not brought forward a single passage of Scripture to disprove what he had said. He omitted, to be sure, some of the objectionable things in the first book, and he restated his views in language somewhat nearer the teaching of the Church; but so far as his main purpose was concerned, it was the same thought as before, only expressed more briefly, and in another form. His opponents were in no wise appeased, and as he lacked both friends and money, while his ignorance of German hindered him in trying to earn his bread, he now

left the German world, and for more than twenty years was as completely lost to sight as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up. What became of him, what an adventurous and exciting life he led during this long period, and how at length he suffered a cruel death for the same teachings that obliged him to leave Germany now, must be told in a later chapter.

What now was the teaching of these books, that they should have so shocked the reformers? Let us glance at them in the briefest and clearest summary of them possible. Taking the teaching of the Bible as absolute and final authority, Servetus held that the nature of God can not be divided, as by any doctrine of one being in three persons, inasmuch as no such doctrine is taught in the Bible, to which indeed the very terms Trinity, essence, substance, and the like as used in the Creeds are foreign, being mere inventions of men. The earlier Fathers of the Church also knew nothing of them, and they were simply foisted upon the Church by the Greeks, who cared more to make men philosophers than to have them to be true Christians.[1] Equally unscriptural is the doctrine of the two natures in Christ. He pours unmeasured scorn and satire on these doctrines, calling them illogical, unreasonable, contradictory, imaginary; and he ridicules the received doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of one God in three persons he says can not be proved, nor even really imagined; and it raises questions which can not be answered, and leads to countless heresies. Those that believe in it are fools and blind: they become in effect atheists, since they are left with no real God at all; while the doctrine of the Trinity really involves a Quaternity of four divine beings. It is the insuperable obstacle to the conversion of Jews and Mohammedans to

[1] See page 32.

Christianity;[1] and such blasphemous teachings ought to be utterly uprooted from men's minds.

In place of these artificial doctrines of the Creeds, Servetus draws from the Bible the following simple doctrines, and quotes many texts to prove them. Firstly, the man Jesus, of whom the Gospels tell, is the Christ, anointed of God. Secondly, this man Jesus the Christ is proved by his miraculous powers and by the statements of Scripture to be literally the human Son of God, because miraculously begotten by him. Thirdly, this man is also God, since he is filled with the divinity which God had granted him; hence he is divine not by nature, as the Creeds teach, but solely by God's gift. God himself is incomprehensible, and we can know him only through Christ, who is thus all in all to us. The Holy Spirit is a power of God,[2] sent in the form of an angel or spirit to make us holy. And the only kind of Trinity in which we may rightly believe is this: that God reveals himself to man under three different aspects (*dispositiones*); for the same divinity which is manifested in the Father is also shared with his Son Jesus, and with the Spirit which dwells in us, making our bodies, as St. Paul says, "the temple of God."

Servetus is often reckoned the first and greatest martyr of Unitarianism; but though all this was of course a very different doctrine from that of the Creeds, it will have been seen that Servetus was not a Unitarian in any true sense. He was more like a Sabellian[3] than anything else, though really his system was peculiar to himself. So it has always remained, for no school of followers rose after him, as after Luther and Calvin, to take up his teachings and carry them

[1] See page 53.
[2] Compare Campanus's teaching, page 48.
[3] See page 15.

on. As a matter of fact, he never withdrew from the Catholic Church, and he says at the end of his second little book that he does not wholly agree nor wholly disagree with either party. Both Catholic and Protestant seem to him to teach partly truth and partly error, while each perceives only the other's errors, but not his own. The matter would be easy enough, he says, if one might only speak out freely in the Church what he felt was God's truth now, without regard to what ancient prophets may have said.

Yet while Servetus made few converts to his precise system of thought, his two little books, though they probably did not circulate in very large numbers,[1] spread far and wide,[2] and had an epoch-making influence; for they focused men's attention sharply upon the foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity. The Catholic world paid little attention to them, but their influence on the Protestant world was at once shown. Instead of converting the reformers to his own views as he had hoped, Servetus simply made them more than ever firmly determined to adhere to the doctrines of the Catholic Creeds. Melanchthon, whom we have seen in his first treatise passing the Trinity by as barely deserving mention, and as not necessary to salvation,[3] in his next edition in 1535 treats the doctrines which Servetus had attacked as absolutely necessary to salvation. Calvin, whom we also saw in his first Catechism slurring over the doctrine of the Trinity very lightly,[4] gives it full treatment in his *Institutes* in 1536, and in 1553 will have Servetus burned at the stake for denying it. All the Protestant creeds are careful henceforth to be unmistakably orthodox on this

1 They were put on sale only at Strassburg and Frankfurt.
2 See page 66.
3 See page 40.
4 See page 40.

point. On the other hand, many who read Servetus became convinced with him that the Trinity is no doctrine of the Bible, and hence ceased to believe it. We shall find numerous traces of his thought in the course of the following chapters.

Twenty years later Servetus enlarged these little books into a much more important one, as we shall see; but although it brought him to the stake, and thus gave his denial of the Trinity great notoriety, all but a very few copies of it were destroyed before any one had a chance to read them, and it is not known to have had any considerable influence. It is through the two little books spoken of in this chapter that Servetus started men out on the line of thought which led at length to modern Unitarianism. How the influence of them spread, undermining belief in the Trinity in various countries during the next twenty years, remains to be seen in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER IX

ANTITRINITARIANISM IN NORTHERN ITALY, 1517–1553

In the two previous chapters we have seen how, during the early years of the Reformation, in Protestant Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, antitrinitarian thought arose only to be at once suppressed. In the present chapter we shall have to trace how at the same time the same sort of thing went on in Catholic Italy. In that country, where men could see the grossest corruptions of the Church at close range, and were anxious to see it purified, the ideas of the reformers at first spread very widely. But the Church's power to suppress heresy was so great that the Reformation never gained much foothold south of the Alps save in two regions, the Republic of Venice, and the Grisons in southeastern Switzerland; and it is in these two districts that we shall find an interesting development toward Unitarian beliefs.

The city of Venice, as the commercial metropolis of Southern Europe, had a very active commerce with the manufacturing cities of Protestant Germany. Hence although Venice had long had on its books the usual laws against heresy, including one for the burning of heretics, the authorities were loath to enforce them strictly, lest their trade with the northern Protestants should be injured. The result was that the Reformation teachings which early were brought to Venice by German traders rapidly spread in the

city, and before long to all the larger towns of the Venetian territory. Many Protestant congregations were formed and regular meetings were held, though of course with more or less secrecy for fear of persecution.

Along with other Protestants, Anabaptist preachers also began early to cross the Alps, probably by way of the Grisons, and their doctrines too spread with great rapidity. By the middle of the sixteenth century over sixty places are reported where they had congregations, and there were doubtless many more than these. The Italian Anabaptists were better organized than their northern brethren, for besides regular ministers they had numerous "bishops," who traveled about from church to church, preaching, ordaining ministers, keeping up close relations between the various congregations, and warning them of danger. Although they had a few members of wealth, or even of noble birth, they were almost entirely of the humble classes, mainly artizans; and of course they had to meet secretly in private houses. They manifested the same liberal tendencies in belief here as north of the Alps, and these received a strong additional impulse from the little books of Servetus on the Trinity, which seem to have been widely circulated among them. His influence in these parts had by 1539 spread to such an extent that reports of it reached Melanchthon, and a letter in his name was addressed to the Senate of Venice, urging that every effort be used to suppress the abominable doctrine of Servetus which had been introduced there;[1] though the letter, if ever received, had little effect.

How thoroughly the orthodox teaching had decayed

[1] Melanchthon afterwards denied responsibility for the letter, though approving its sentiments. The material thing is that it gives contemporary evidence of the active currency of Servetus's views in Venice in the late 1530's.

among these Anabaptists of northern Italy is shown by the conclusions of a remarkable church Council which they held at Venice in 1550—so far as is known the only Council they ever held at all. They had a strong church at Vicenza, and discussion had arisen there in that or the previous year as to whether Christ were God or man; and as there was a difference of opinion, it was decided to call together a Council to determine the matter. Messengers were sent to all the congregations in northern Italy, inviting each of them to send its minister and a lay delegate. The Council met at Venice in September, 1550, and was attended by some sixty delegates from several of the larger cities and many of the smaller towns in Italy, as well as from congregations in the Grisons, and from St. Gallen and Basel in Switzerland. It is inferred that as many as forty churches must have been represented. The delegates were carefully scattered about in lodgings so as not to attract attention and invite persecution, and their expenses were contributed by the larger congregations. The sessions were held in secret, and continued almost daily for forty days; they were opened with prayer, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated three times. Having taken the teaching of Scripture for their sole authority, they at length agreed upon ten points of doctrine. The one of most interest to us here is the very first article, which declares that Christ was not God but man, born of Joseph and Mary, but endowed with divine powers. These conclusions were made binding upon all their congregations, and were accepted by all but one, which was therefore forced to break off fellowship with the others; and one Pietro Manelfi, who had formerly been a Catholic priest, but having turned Protestant had for the past year been a traveling Anabaptist preacher, visiting the scattered congregations all over northern and central Italy, was appointed

one of two to go about among them and preach the doctrines just adopted.[1]

Meanwhile the Protestant doctrines had been making such alarming progress in Italy that the means previously used by the Catholic Church to suppress heresy were proving insufficient, so that in 1542 the Italian Inquisition had been established for the especial purpose of hunting out heretics and bringing them to punishment; and in the Venetian territory many Protestants had already been imprisoned or banished, had recanted or fled. Perhaps scenting danger to himself, the ex-priest Manelfi, about a year after the Council at Venice, returned to the obedience of the Roman Church, appeared before the Inquisition, gave a full account of the spread of Anabaptism and of the proceedings of the Council, and betrayed the names of all the members whom he could recall. Orders were at once issued for their arrest, and trials of them went on at Venice during the next year. Some recanted, some fled the country and went to Turkey where under Mohammedan rule they could find the freedom of worship denied them in Christian Italy, some seem to have joined a community of Anabaptists in Moravia, many doubtless suffered imprisonment, and two or three, returning to Italy years afterwards, were then seized and put to death. The burning of heretics had ceased to be practised at Venice, for the reason given above.[2] Instead, a method of ex-

[1] The above account of the Council at Venice, based upon records of the Inquisition brought to light in 1885, represents the truth probably underlying the more or less legendary account (first published as late as 1678) of certain "conferences" said to have been held at Vicenza in 1546 and participated in by nearly all the Italians who afterwards promoted Unitarian thought, and also to have anticipated most of the distinctive doctrines of seventeenth century Socinianism. The account of these interesting conferences given in all the books hitherto had now best be forgotten.

[2] See page 65.

ecution was used which would be more secret, and hence bring less reproach upon the city. In the darkness of midnight the victim, attended only by a priest to act as confessor, was taken in a gondola out into the Adriatic, where a second gondola was in waiting. A plank was laid between the two, and the prisoner, weighted with stone, was placed upon it. A signal was given, the gondolas parted, and the heretic was no more.

Thus in the Republic of Venice antitrinitarian beliefs, which had come to prevail in a large majority of the Anabaptist congregations, came to a tragic end. Of the most numerous congregation, that at Vicenza, at least a few members still remained in 1553, in correspondence with one of their faith in Switzerland; but though many others doubtless continued here and there to cherish their faith in private, or to speak of it to trusted friends, they no longer dared do anything to win converts to it, and we hear no more of them, there or elsewhere. We noted, however, that some of the delegates to the Council at Venice came from Anabaptist congregations in the Grisons, and we must next turn thither to trace another chapter of struggle and persecution.

CHAPTER X

ANTITRINITARIANISM IN THE GRISONS, 1542–1579

The antitrinitarian movement which in the last chapter we followed among the Anabaptists of northern Italy was, as was noted, with few exceptions a movement among the poor and humble. Its main concern was with practical reforms of the Christian religion, considered as a means of bringing men nearer to God. We have now to turn to a quite different sort of movement, which took its rise among some of the most highly cultivated minds in Italy, and was mainly concerned with the reform of the Christian doctrines. It was the latter of these two antitrinitarian tendencies that was destined in the next generation to take root among the liberal Protestants of Poland, and to determine the prevailing character of the Unitarian movement for nearly three centuries.

The spirit of free inquiry which began with Italian Humanism in the generation before the Reformation had no little influence on some of the finest spirits in the Catholic Church, able scholars, eloquent preachers, and noble ladies; and through these it soon began widely to affect the educated middle classes, especially in the cities. This movement, which was much influenced by the writings of the German reformers, aimed at reform from within the Church, and sought to lead men to cultivate a simple, devout form of Christianity, which greatly valued religion as a personal experience, but laid little emphasis upon creeds or doctrines.

This first step toward a more liberal form of faith within the bosom of the Catholic Church can best be followed by our now speaking of several persons active in this movement, who were of importance in the religious history of the time.

Juan de Valdez was a Spanish nobleman, born about 1500, who had to flee from the Spanish Inquisition and in 1530 came to Italy to live. He was a gentleman of rare accomplishments and great social charm, and his home at Naples became the resort of noble ladies and gentlemen, distinguished scholars, and famous preachers of the religious orders. He had accepted the views of Luther, and in meetings which he used to hold at his house at Naples on Sundays for religious conversation he introduced them to his guests. Thus, and through books of his which are still prized as devotional classics, he exerted a wide influence in favor of spiritual and undogmatic religion. Fortunately for himself he died, universally lamented, in 1541, the year before the founding of the Italian Inquisition, which, had he lived much longer, would undoubtedly have called him to account. For while it is not correct to call him an Antitrinitarian, as has often been done, yet he carefully avoids the doctrine of the Trinity in his writings; and the tendency of his influence may be judged from the fact that several of those who fell under it became decidedly heretical on this point, as we shall see in this and later chapters.

Even more famous than Valdez, and of wider influence, was Bernardino Ochino. He was born at Siena in 1487, was of humble parentage and limited education, though of great natural talents, and was destined to be esteemed incomparably the best preacher in Italy. Seeking to save his soul by a more holy life, he entered the order of St. Francis in young manhood, and after twenty years becoming dissatisfied with the laxity of this he joined the yet stricter order of

Capuchin Friars, in which he received the singular honor of being twice chosen Vicar-General. The preaching of the Catholic Church was at that time done exclusively by the friars; and Ochino, now become celebrated for his eloquent preaching, drew immense crowds to hear his Lenten sermons at Venice and Naples, and was everywhere received with the greatest distinction, while at the same time revered almost as a saint for his self-denying and holy life. While thus preaching at Naples he was drawn within the circle of Valdez's influence, and became deeply interested in the reformation of the Church, and in a religion which should lay much stress upon a devout and holy life, but little upon the doctrines of the Creeds. He was in a fair way, through his great influence over the people, to become the Luther of Italy, when the Inquisition resented his public criticism of its intolerant spirit, and summoned him to appear before it in Rome. Having received an intimation that his death was already determined upon, he fled from Italy in 1542 by way of the Grisons, and joined the Protestants beyond the Alps. In a later chapter we shall follow his career there, where late in life he was suspected of having become an Antitrinitarian. Meanwhile he left behind him in Italy an influence on many who soon had to flee like himself, of whom several are counted among the early Antitrinitarians.

A more tragic fate befell Aonio Paleario, who was born about 1500, embraced the scholar's life, and became a professor at several of the Italian universities. He too became greatly interested in the reform of religion in much the same way as Valdez and Ochino, and though several times threatened with prosecution for heresy, he was defended by such powerful friends that he escaped. At length, however, the Inquisition laid its relentless hands upon him, and after

three years' imprisonment at an advanced old age, he was hanged, and his body burned, in 1570.

The cases of these three distinguished Italian Catholics who wished to reform the religion of their Church will serve to illustrate how in Italy the ground was being mellowed to receive the seeds of more radical thought. For if the first article of the Creeds could be passed over by these leaders as not vitally important to Christianity, the next step would be yet more easy: to reject it outright as not scriptural, or not reasonable, and hence as not true. This next step was soon taken, as we shall see, though not in Italy. For beginning with 1542 the Inquisition became ever more active in scenting out Protestant heresy and persecuting heretics. Whenever one of any importance was discovered, and was unwilling to renounce his faith, he had to flee the country in haste, as Ochino had done, lest he perish as Paleario did. So that during the next generation large numbers of Italian refugees emigrated to Switzerland or beyond, where they might both preserve their lives and keep their religious faith.

The nearest and most convenient place of refuge, to which most of them first fled, was the Grisons, which lay safely beyond the reach of the Inquisition, yet partly on the Italian side of the Alps, with the climate which Italians loved, and a language which they could understand. The Grisons at the time of the Reformation were a loose confederation, in the extreme southeast of Switzerland, of three leagues which had asserted their independence of other powers and in 1471 had joined together in a highly democratic republic, and had early in the sixteenth century come to include adjoining districts in Italy, to which in our time they again belong. It is a country of varied and beautiful scenery lying both north and south of the Alps, with narrow and se-

cluded Alpine valleys and lofty snow-peaks; and its valleys, passes, and towns are well known to travelers.

Numerous heretics in these remote valleys are said to have escaped the vigilance of the Church all through the Middle Ages; and the Reformation spread so rapidly here that in 1526 the Diet of Ilanz decreed equal religious freedom to Protestants and Catholics, and recognized the Scriptures as the only authority in religion, though at the same time it outlawed the Anabaptists, and ordained that heretics should be punished by banishment. The Grisons were thus at this time more advanced in religious toleration than any other country in Christian Europe.

Anabaptists expelled from Zürich had come here almost as soon as the Reformation itself, and the teachings of Denck spread with the rest, soon followed by those of Servetus; but the most active influences came from the Italian refugees. By 1550 more than two hundred of them, and by 1559 more than eight hundred, had passed this way, the number steadily rising as the Inquisition grew more severe. Their preachers, most of them formerly preachers of the religious orders who had been influenced by the teachings of Luther, were eagerly welcomed for the aid they could give in spreading the Reformation among the Italian population; and in an atmosphere of comparative freedom their religious thought developed so rapidly, that it was not long before some of them came quite to disbelieve doctrines which hitherto they had only ignored.

The first of these Italians to attract attention by his unorthodox teaching in the Grisons was an ex-monk, Francesco of Calabria, who had been one of the followers of Valdez, and who maintained that he was a disciple of Ochino. He was pastor of a church in the Lower Engadine where, along with certain Anabaptist doctrines and the denial of

eternal punishment, he seemed to teach that Christ was inferior to God. The orthodox therefore complained of him, and although he was strongly supported by his own parish, he was convicted of heresy and banished from the country in 1544. Another ex-monk and disciple of Ochino, Girolamo Marliano, pastor of the neighboring church of Lavin, besides holding Anabaptist views also taught that the doctrine of the Trinity, as commonly held, is contradictory and absurd. He was therefore dismissed by his church, and later went to Basel.

A bolder step was taken by a mysterious traveling preacher who is known to us only by the name of Tiziano, and of whose origin and fate no memory survives. He had been in some cardinal's court at Rome, had accepted the teachings of Luther, and had later become an Anabaptist. It was he that converted and re-baptized the priest Manelfi at Florence in 1548 or 1549, after which they together visited the brethren at Vicenza; and at the Anabaptist Council at Venice in 1550 he appeared as a delegate from some congregation in the Grisons, whither he had evidently had to flee from Italy. Besides his entertaining the usual Anabaptist views, his especial offense was that he considered Christ only an ordinary man, filled with the divine Spirit, but not miraculously born. These views he preached at many places in the Grisons, winning numerous followers. But the orthodox at length became so enraged against him that he was in imminent danger of being put to death, had not milder counsels prevailed. He was arrested, and after long refusal was finally brought by threats of death to sign a statement which had been prepared for him, explicitly renouncing his errors. His influence over his followers having thus been destroyed, he was flogged through the streets, and forever banished from the country in 1554.

But the widest and deepest influence is generally ascribed to one Camillo. He was a Sicilian scholar, who had been with Valdez at Naples; and after embracing the doctrines of the Reformation he assumed the name by which he is best known, Renato, by which he signified his feeling that he had been "born again." A man of talents and fine education, he had a singular power of deeply influencing those whom he attracted to him. He was by nature serious, reserved, and shy; and his opponents regarded him as crafty and insidious in spreading his views. To escape the danger that threatened all Protestants, he fled from Italy in 1542 and came to the Valtellina, where he supported himself as tutor to the sons of prominent families. But although he was a teacher by occupation, his deepest interest was in questions of theology, which he seems to have taken every opportunity to discuss with his pupils and trusted friends.

Renato had imbibed Anabaptist views, and was one of the earliest Italian Anabaptists to exert much influence; he had also read Servetus. It may well have been he that converted Tiziano. Quite independently of the Creeds he had developed a simple system of belief which shows that he was much of a mystic. But though he was not orthodox as to the atonement, and held that Christ inherited a sinful nature so that he at least could have sinned, yet he never let it be known, unless perhaps to his intimate friends, whether he believed in the doctrine of the Trinity or not. It is very noteworthy, however, that several of the most important of those that later spread antitrinitarian views north of the Alps had been in Renato's circle in the Grisons; and his system of belief in several respects so closely resembles that afterwards taught by Socinians (Unitarians) in Poland, that it is hard not to trace these various results to his quiet influence as their source.

Renato left the Valtellina in 1545 for Chiavenna, the center of the Reformation in the Italian Grisons, where he soon acquired much influence, and where refugees fleeing into Switzerland were likely, if they remained long, to meet him and learn his views. Here he fell into a long and bitter controversy upon the Lord's Supper (a subject very hotly debated among the early reformers), with the pastor of the Chiavenna church, in which he had won a large number of sympathizers. The end of the matter was that, having refused to refrain from spreading his views, he was excommunicated in 1550, and returned to the Valtellina. From now on we lose track of him, save that four years later he sent from here to Calvin an eloquent Latin poem of protest at the burning of Servetus, and in favor of religious toleration, and that he was yet living, though blind, until after 1560. He still kept up relations with his friends through correspondence, and his influence long persisted.

Among those to take Renato's part and receive his influence was Francesco Stancaro, formerly a monk, and very famous as a Hebrew scholar. After turning Protestant he fled to the Grisons, whence he soon went on to Switzerland. Through his unorthodox teaching as to the Atonement he later did much, as we shall see, to prepare the way for Unitarianism in Poland and Transylvania.

The narrow mountain valleys of the Grisons were no place for men whose life had been spent in the society of large towns and the world of scholars. Most of the leaders therefore soon went on to the stirring centers of Geneva, Zürich, Basel, or Strassburg, where we shall hear more of some of them in connection with our history. Alone of those whom we have named, Renato remained behind; and even after we cease to hear of him directly the leaven of his teaching continued to work. But in 1570 the Diet voted to banish all

Anabaptists and Arians; and when two notorious Antitrinitarians from Geneva returned in 1579 for a visit to the Grisons, they were ordered to leave the country.

Thus the antitrinitarian movement disappeared also from the Grisons, although it is most interesting to discover not only that nine of the old Protestant churches of that district still exist, with a numerous membership, but that more than half their pastors are decidedly liberal, preaching a Christianity which no longer insists upon creeds or believes in miracles. The teachings that were nourished there in the time of which we have spoken, however, were not destroyed by the persecution they received, but simply transplanted beyond the Alps. For it was as though the Grisons had been a hot-bed for heresy, in which the seed-thoughts planted in the minds of the Italian refugees might develop, protected from the harsh winds of persecution, until they were strong enough to be transplanted into the more vigorous atmosphere of northern Europe, where they were later to bear fruit. Under this figure, the tending and cultivating of the young plants until they were well rooted was largely the quiet work of Camillo Renato. Meantime the stage had been setting for another and more dramatic scene at Geneva, and we must therefore return to follow the later history and the tragic fate of Servetus.

CHAPTER XI

SERVETUS IN FRANCE, 1532–1553

Soon after the publication of his *Dialogues on the Trinity* in 1532, Servetus finding himself friendless, penniless, and in imminent danger of trial for heresy, left Basel and was no more heard of for twenty-one years. As Germany and Switzerland had grown too hot to hold him he next went to France, and in order the better to conceal himself he dropped his name of Servetus and adopted that of his early home, and thus became Michel de Villeneuve (Michael Villanovanus). We first find him in Paris, perhaps disheartened for a time over his failure as a religious reformer, and studying mathematics at the University for some two years, while he became so proficient that presently he was giving university lectures on the subject. In this period he met the young Calvin, who was now becoming prominent in the Reformation, and was later to bring him to the stake. He challenged Calvin to a public debate on religious subjects, and the meeting was arranged for; but in the end Servetus failed to appear—why, we do not know, though he may well have shrunk from the danger involved in a city where every day heretics were being burned at the stake.

Want of money now forced him to interrupt his studies, and he therefore went to Lyon (Lyons), which ranked next to Paris as a publishing center, and here for over two years he was employed by a famous publishing house as corrector of proof, which was then a common occupation for scholars.

In this capacity Servetus served as editor of a new edition of Ptolemy's celebrated Geography, which the recent explorations in the New World had made necessary. He enriched this work by many pungent notes, and one of these, which spoke of Palestine as a very poor country for a "promised land," afterwards brought him into trouble as a defamer of Moses. His work on the proof of several medical works, however, opened to him a new field of interest, and brought him influential acquaintances in the medical world, so that having replenished his purse he returned to Paris and became a student of medicine.

Servetus remained in Paris about four years, studying under the most distinguished physicians and anatomists of the age. He won the praise of one of his masters as almost unrivalled in his knowledge of medicine, wrote a little book on digestion which was so popular that it ran through five editions in France and Italy, and at length he was graduated as Doctor of Medicine.[1] In the course of his studies he made a discovery which renders him forever distinguished in the history of physiology. He discovered that it is through the lungs that the blood passes from the right to the left side of the heart. Yet he evidently did not appreciate the importance of the discovery, or else was pre-occupied with another theme, for he never referred to it at all except to use it as an incidental illustration in a theological work not published until fifteen years later; and since this work (as we shall see) never got into circulation, his great discovery remained buried and unknown for a century and a half, until long after Harvey and others had made the discovery again. At the solicitation of his friends Servetus gave public lectures at the University on geography and astrology, which were attended by large numbers. Astrol-

[1] Though probably elsewhere than at Paris.

ogy was still in good repute, and the line was not sharply drawn between that and meteorology. Theologians like Melanchthon believed in it and practiced it, and kings and princes had their court astrologers whom they consulted before any important undertaking. In his lectures and in a published pamphlet on the subject, Servetus took occasion to make disrespectful remarks about the medical scholars of the time, charging them with ignorance for neglecting this important subject, and calling them a plague of the world. His colleagues in the faculty were furious, and had him haled before the Inquisitor on a charge of heresy. When he was acquitted of this, they prosecuted him before the Supreme Court for advocating the practice of divination, which was forbidden on pain of death by fire. The Court ordered Servetus to withdraw his pamphlet, to pay his colleagues more respect, and to cease lecturing on the subject. But he had now had enough of academic life, and so he left Paris and entered upon the practice of medicine.

There are rumors of his having wandered rather widely for a time, but at length he settled down at Charlieu, near Lyon, and for a year or so practiced his profession with such success as to arouse the envy of his competitors, who caused him to be assaulted one dark night as he went to visit a patient. He was now invited, however, by the Archbishop of Vienne, who had known him in Paris, to become his private physician and to occupy a dwelling in his own palace, and thus about 1540 he entered upon ten or twelve peaceful and happy years, the longest quiet period of his adventurous and troubled life, during which he acquired fame and fortune as a physician, and at the same time pursued the studies he loved. For in this period, along with his duties to the sick, to whom he showed great devotion during the plague of 1542, he continued to correct proof for

various works, and brought out a new edition of Ptolemy in which he softened down some of the notes that had given offense before, but above all edited a celebrated edition of the Bible. A Dominican monk, Sante Pagnino, had a few years before made a new translation of the Bible into Latin, which was highly esteemed for its excellence; and as he had now died, the publisher employed Servetus to edit a new edition, and to supply it with a preface and notes. In doing this he laid down some startling new principles of interpreting Scripture, and in applying them to the Psalms and Prophets he showed that many passages supposed to be predictions of Christ really refer in the first instance to the writer's own time though in their full meaning they may also look forward to Christ. He thus anticipated the modern higher criticism of the Old Testament by two hundred and fifty years; but at the time these notes gave great offense, and the Catholics put them on their *Index* of forbidden books, while Calvin later made them the basis for a part of the charges which brought Servetus to his death.

It was perhaps this new study of the Bible that revived his old interest in theology, and the quiet and leisure of his life at Vienne now enabled him again to cultivate it. Enthusiastic dreamer that he was, he felt that the whole world might still be won to that view of Christianity which seemed to him so much more simple and scriptural than the one current in the churches; and though fifteen years ago he had failed with the Swiss and German reformers, Calvin had now come to the fore in Geneva, and was the most influential figure in the Protestant world. Servetus became obsessed with the idea that he might convert Calvin; and so, finding a go-between in one Frellon, a publisher of Lyon for whom Servetus had done literary work and who knew them both, he opened correspondence by asking Calvin three questions as

to Jesus the Son of God, the kingdom of Christ and regeneration, and baptism. The correspondence began on the plane of courtesy, but it soon degenerated into coarse abuse and invective. Servetus was writing with the purpose of showing Calvin his errors, and he begged him to give up as unscriptural his belief in that great and impossible monster of three beings in one, and talked down to him as to an inferior. Calvin had now so long been practically dictator at Geneva that he had come to expect respectful deference from all who approached him, and although always ready to teach was little inclined to be taught. His patience was soon at an end; and as he found Servetus greatly lacking in humility, after a few letters he broke off the correspondence, and in place of writing more he sent Servetus a copy of his *Institutes* to which he referred him as a true statement of the Christian faith. Servetus later returned this with offensive criticisms scribbled all over the margins. Calvin took this as a personal insult. "There is not a page," he said, "that he has left free from his vomit." Servetus continued for two years to pursue Calvin with letters, to the number of thirty, and did not scruple to call him a reprobate, a blasphemer, a Jew, a thief, and a robber. Calvin was equal to the occasion, and referred to Servetus's letters as the braying of an ass. Nothing daunted, Servetus then sent Calvin the manuscript of a book he had lately written, seeking thus again to draw him into argument over the views it expressed. Calvin read the manuscript, but refused to answer it, and paid no heed to Servetus's repeated requests for its return. Still hoping to convert Calvin, Servetus next offered to go to Geneva and discuss the questions with him in person, if only assured of safe conduct; but Calvin would give no pledge: instead he wrote to his friend Farel, pastor at Neuchatel, that if Servetus came,

and his own influence amounted to anything, he would never allow him to get away alive. Having failed with Calvin, Servetus next tried to draw out his fellow reformers, Poupin, pastor at Geneva, and Viret, pastor at Lausanne. To the former he wrote, "In place of one God you have a three-headed Cerberus, in place of faith you have a fatal dream, and good deeds you call worthless pictures"; and then, as if with a premonition of his fate, he added, "That I must die for this cause I know full well, but for all that I have good courage, if only I may become a disciple like the Master."

Having now failed in all quarters to make any impression, Servetus again felt driven to publish his views for wide reading, and he was the more strongly impelled to do this because he was convinced by a passage of Scripture [1] that the kingdom of Antichrist (the Papacy) was to come to an end in 1585, and he had the conviction that he himself was the Michael who it was foretold was to put the great dragon under his feet. A Basel printer friend of his to whom Servetus offered the manuscript dared not print it, but at length after much difficulty, and by paying a large bonus, he got it printed in great secrecy in a vacant house in Vienne, of course with no indication of place, printer, or author; though he could not resist the temptation to put his own initials at the end, and to insert his name in several places in the text. This work was entitled *The Restoration of Christianity* (*Christianismi Restitutio*). About half of it consisted of a recast of Servetus's two earlier books on the Trinity, to which he now added his thirty letters to Calvin, and an address to Melanchthon, making in all a book of over 700 pages. It contains Servetus's plan for a more thorough and complete reformation of Christianity

[1] Revelation 12: 7–10.

than the Protestant reformers had attempted. Though its thought is more developed, it does not essentially differ from the earlier works; but it is harsher than before, and while holding a position something between Catholics and Protestants it is especially bitter toward the reformers, while it violently attacks the traditional doctrine of the Trinity with every weapon to be drawn from reason, history, or Scripture. It is in this book that Servetus describes the circulation of the blood referred to above.

This work was printed early in 1553, a thousand copies of it. They were sent in bales to Lyon, where they were to be held until they could be put on sale at the Easter fairs there and at Frankfurt, the great book markets of northern Europe. Frellon, probably not foreseeing the consequences of his act, at once sent a copy to Calvin, who could easily see from a comparison of it with the manuscript which Servetus had sent him, that both were from the same author. It would never do to let such heresy be sown over Europe, to say nothing of the disrespect shown himself in the letters the book contained; and Calvin was quick to act. Now it happened that he had a neighbor and confidential friend, one Guillaume Trie, a Protestant refugee from Lyon, who was still in correspondene with a Catholic relative there. To him Calvin related what he knew of this new book and its author. Trie at once wrote to his Catholic relative (it is hard not to believe that this was done with Calvin's knowledge and approval, for he had himself previously denounced Servetus to the Archbishop of Lyon as a heretic), saying to him that there was a heretic in his vicinity who deserved to be burned alive for blaspheming the Trinity and uttering other dreadful heresies; that his name was Michael Servetus, though he now called himself Villeneuve; and that he was living at Vienne as a physician. To clinch the matter he

inclosed the first four sheets of the *Restitutio.* It came out as Trie (and Calvin) desired. The letter soon reached the hands of the Inquisitor. Steps were cautiously taken, Servetus was summoned before the authorities and questioned, and his lodgings were searched. The printers were likewise examined; but no evidence could be found, and the accused were all discharged.

Trie was then written to for further proof of what he had charged, and he produced it nothing loath, Calvin assisting. He forwarded a number of letters which Servetus had written to Calvin and marked confidential, and the copy of the *Institutes* with Servetus's notes on the margin, and later on also the manuscript book which Servetus had sent Calvin some years before. The judges examined these, found the evidence convincing, and caused Servetus to be arrested and brought before them. After artfully leading him on through questions as to his former life and writings and meeting with some evasion, the judges at length laid before him the letters written in his own hand which he could not well deny, but signed Servetus, thus identifying the Dr. Michel de Villeneuve before them with the notorious heretic Michael Servetus. Realizing that he was cornered, and grasping at any straw that might save him from death, he made an artful equivocation, which, however, did not deceive his judges. Before the examination was concluded the court adjourned for the night. That evening Servetus sent his servant from the prison to collect a large sum of money owing to him, and the next morning at daybreak he made his escape from prison—as was generally believed, not without connivance on the part of influential friends. When his escape was discovered, he was already well out of reach. The trial went on without him, and dragged on for ten weeks. The printers were discovered, and bales containing 500 copies of the

book were found at Lyon.[1] Servetus was found guilty of heresy and various related crimes, and was condemned to be burned to death by a slow fire, along with his books.

It was not the custom in those times to put off the execution of a capital sentence simply because the condemned could not be found. An effigy of Servetus was therefore made that very day, and after being first duly hanged, was burned, together with his books, in the public square, whereat perhaps every one was well enough satisfied save the Inquisitor—and Calvin. The trial had been by the civil court. The ecclesiastical court now proceeded to do its duty in trying Servetus on its own account. Two days before Christmas it too found him guilty of heresy, and again condemned him to be burned at the stake. But it was too late. Servetus had already met his fiery fate at Geneva two months before. How he came thither will be told in the next chapter.

[1] The rest of the edition, save a few copies retained by the prosecution, had been sent to Frankfurt, where they were later destroyed at Calvin's instance. The original is therefore one of the rarest books in the world, and only three copies are extant, in libraries at Vienna, Paris, and Edinburgh. A page-for-page reprint is also very rare.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF SERVETUS AT GENEVA, 1553

Although escaped from his imprisonment at Vienne, Servetus found the world by no means a place in which he might feel free to go or be wherever he would. He dared not stay in France for fear of recapture. It was hardly more safe for him to return to the Rhine country whence he had fled years before, and where he might still be recognized. Still less could he think of returning to his native land in fanatical Spain. He therefore determined to go to Naples in order to practice his profession among his countrymen, of whom many had fled thither for the sake of enjoying greater religious liberty. He thought at first of crossing the Pyrenees and going through Spain, but danger of arrest on the border deterred him, and after wandering like a hunted thing for four months he at length turned to the route through Switzerland into northern Italy as the safest one for him. Fortunately for him, he was well provided with money.

Thus it was that Servetus at length arrived at an inn in Geneva one evening about the middle of August, intending as soon as possible to get a boat up the lake on his way to Zürich and Italy. He had meant to keep out of sight as much as possible, hoping thus to escape discovery; but unhappily for him the next day was Sunday, when the laws required every one to attend church, and he may indeed even

have been curious to hear Calvin preach. Here he was recognized before ever the sermon began. Calvin felt that Servetus had long deserved death as a blasphemer and heretic, and he may have suspected that he had come in order to spread his heresies in Geneva itself, and thus to endanger the success of the Reformation there. He was the more keenly alive to this danger since he had but lately had a letter telling him how rapidly and widely the diabolical teachings of Servetus had spread in the cities of northern Italy. He therefore felt bound to do all in his power to rid the world of Servetus, now that the Inquisition at Vienne had failed of doing so, and he at once caused him to be arrested and thrown into prison. The law required that the accuser in such a case should be imprisoned with the accused until the charges were established, and since this would be inconvenient for himself Calvin got a student named Nicolas de la Fontaine, who was living in his household as his secretary, to enter the prison in his stead as the accuser.

Before proceeding to speak of the long trial that followed, it will be necessary for a clear understanding of it to say something of Calvin himself, and of conditions in Geneva at this time. John Calvin had been born in 1509, two years before Servetus, at Noyon in Picardie, and had been well educated and designed for the priesthood. Later falling out with the Church, he had, like Servetus, studied law; and he was becoming converted to the views of the Reformation at the very time when Servetus was publishing his first books against the Trinity. In 1536 he had published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a clear, logical, and able presentation of the Protestant system of belief, much the strongest work yet written in defense of the Protestant cause; and this had at once caused him to be recognized as the intellectual leader of the Reformed reli-

gion outside Germany. Obliged to flee from France, where no Protestant's life was quite safe, he had happened to come to Geneva at the very moment when the cause of the Reformation, which had been adopted earlier that year, hung trembling in the balance for want of a powerful leader. Quite against his inclination he was pressed into service there, and although never in name more than one of the city pastors and a preacher and teacher of theology, he soon became in fact, and by the force of his character, practically dictator.

Geneva in 1553 was a cosmopolitan little city of about 20,000 inhabitants. Before the Reformation it had been gay and dissolute, and even now its people were much given to pleasure, and none too strict in their morals. Calvin determined to change all this, and to make Geneva a model for the Protestant world, with its life strictly conformed to the Word of God. He soon brought order out of chaos, reformed the code of laws, and aimed by strict laws strictly enforced, even as to the small details of private life, to root out vice and make religion and good morals universal among the inhabitants. The Genevese, however, resenting that a mere foreigner should thus interfere with their old habits and customs, rose in indignant opposition, and after two years drove Calvin and his fellow reformer, Farel, into exile, forbidding them ever to return. Thereupon things drifted from bad to worse until after three years it was necessary to recall Calvin. He returned in 1541 to remain at Geneva for the rest of his life, ruling with a more absolute hand than ever, though not without great and persistent opposition. The Libertines (as the strong party opposed to Calvin came at a later time to be called) found him in the way of their political ambitions, and determined if possible to destroy his power. After he had caused one of their

number to be beheaded in 1547 they became doubly infuriated against him. They insulted him in every way: named their dogs Calvin, and called him Cain. The struggle was hard and hot, and the outcome of it was long uncertain. After gaining some temporary victories over his opponents, Calvin had had to face renewed opposition, and in the summer of 1553 he seemed to be all but defeated. This was the critical state of things when Servetus arrived upon the scene, with the Libertines ready, if opportunity offered, to take any advantage of his presence in order further to thwart Calvin's influence. The trial of Servetus was thus not merely a trial of an individual for heresy, but one in which political and personal interests were also deeply involved; and on its outcome seemed to depend not simply the life of the accused, but also the fate of the Reformation in Geneva, and perhaps even in all Switzerland and France.

On the day after his arrest Servetus was brought for preliminary examination before the proper authority, to whom de la Fontaine, his formal accuser, presented a complaint against Servetus, drawn up by Calvin under thirty-eight articles. These were based mainly on the *Restitutio*, and after charging that some twenty-four years ago Servetus had begun to trouble the churches with his heresies, and had since then continued his mischief by his notes on the Bible and on Ptolemy, and by a recent book full of infinite blasphemies, and that he was an escaped prisoner from Vienne; they went on to charge him with destroying the very foundations of Christianity by various heresies as to the Trinity, the person of Christ, the immortality of the soul, and infant baptism; and finally led up to the climax by charging that he had defamed Calvin by heaping all possible blasphemies upon him, and had concealed his scandalous views from the printer at Vienne. Some of these charges Servetus at once

admitted as true, some he denied as false, and some he explained away; adding, however, that if in anything he had fallen into error he was willing to stand corrected. But on the whole the charges were held to be well taken, and it was ordered that he be held for trial.

On the following day trial was begun before the Little Council of Geneva, and conducted by the Prosecuting Attorney. Servetus being duly sworn was reëxamined on the charges made the previous day. He now made his admissions and denials rather more distinct than before, but took a fling at Calvin by saying that it was no fault of *his* that he had not been burned alive at Vienne, and that he was ready before a full congregation to give Calvin the reasons and scripture proofs for his teachings. A little later one of Calvin's most prominent supporters entered the case as counsel for the prosecution, while on the other hand one of his most active political opponents took a hand in defense of Servetus. This threatened to turn the case into a phase of the political struggle to overthrow Calvin, so that he now resolved to take no chances, but threw off the mask and came into court himself as openly the accuser, and assisted in the prosecution of the case. In the further examination of Servetus little new evidence was brought out, save that Servetus had applied to those that believed in the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity the term Trinitarians,[1] at which Calvin took the greatest offense. The prosecution now

[1] The term Trinitarian was in the sixteenth century applied to heretics holding certain incorrect views as to the Trinity (it was often applied, curiously enough, by Catholic writers, to Unitarians), hence Calvin's objection to it. But as is wont to happen with names applied to opponents, this one stuck and later came into general use to designate any believer in the Trinity. Servetus insisted in his trial that he himself believed in the true Trinity of the early Fathers, though not in the corrupted doctrine of later times.

maintained that the charges against Servetus had been sufficiently proved to show him a criminal, and asked that de la Fontaine be discharged from his imprisonment as accuser, and this was granted. The Attorney-General therefore took charge of the prosecution in the name of the State, and opened a new stage of the trial by bringing in an entirely new indictment; while Calvin soon retired again into the background, though from the pulpit he appealed to public feeling by making bitter attacks against Servetus. Meanwhile it had been voted to request the authorities at Vienne to send a copy of the evidence they had against Servetus, and then to lay the case before the other churches of Switzerland for their information.

Now that the regular state trial was about to commence, Servetus came before the court with a motion that he be discharged. His grounds were that it was not the custom of the Apostles nor of the first Christian Emperors to treat heretics as guilty of capital crime, but only to excommunicate or at the most banish them; that he had committed no crime either in their territory or elsewhere; that the questions he had treated were only for scholars, and he had never spoken of them to others; that as for the Anabaptists, with whom they had sought to identify him as a person dangerous to public order, he had always disapproved of them; and finally, since he was a stranger and ignorant of the customs of the land and of the forms of legal procedure, he asked for legal counsel to conduct his case for him.

The items in the new indictment touched but lightly on the doctrinal matters which had been so prominent in the original charges, but instead were designed to show that Servetus had long been spreading doctrines opposed to Christianity as commonly received, and had led a criminal and immoral life; that his very teaching led to immorality

and favored other religions; that his doctrines were those of heretics long ago condemned; and that he had come to Geneva in order to disturb that city with them. When he was examined, Servetus's answers to these questions were so frank and clear that he must have created a very favorable impression upon his judges. The Attorney-General, however, apparently coached by Calvin, at once sought to counteract this impression by taking up Servetus's petition of a few days before and arguing that all the reasons urged for his discharge were unsupported by fact; that it was therefore evident that Servetus was one of the most audacious, rash, and dangerous heretics that had ever lived, since he wished to have the very laws annulled under which heretics might be punished; that his Anabaptist teachings were the least of his errors; that in his testimony he had lied and contradicted himself; that it had never been heard of that such criminals should be represented by counsel;[1] and moreover that he was so clearly guilty that he needed no attorney. His request was therefore denied, and the trial went on to further examination of the prisoner.

In due time a reply was received from the authorities at Vienne, sending a copy of the sentence there passed against Servetus, but claiming jurisdiction over him as an escaped prisoner for crimes committed in their territory, and therefore asking that he be returned to them for punishment. They also begged to be excused from forwarding evidence for any one else to try him on. Upon being asked whether he chose to be tried here or to be sent back to Vienne, Servetus threw himself upon the ground and begged them with tears not to send him back, but to try him here and do with him as they would. This fell in well with the ideas of Calvin

[1] In fact, under the laws of Geneva at this time, and even under those of England long after this, an accused felon was denied counsel.

and his friends, for if the heretic were to be burned at all they wished the credit of it, in order to prove that Protestants were not less zealous than Catholics to preserve the purity of the Christian faith. They therefore politely declined to grant the request from Vienne, though they promised that justice should be done.

When the heretical teachings of Servetus next came up for discussion, it was felt that the discussion might take up too much time if carried on in court, and besides the subject was one too intricate for the judges to pass upon. It was therefore agreed that the necessary books should be furnished Servetus in prison, and that he and Calvin should discuss in writing the points at issue between them. The papers thus written, together with the rest of the documents in the case, were then to be submitted to the Swiss churches for their advice as to what to do; though this reference of the case can have been little to Calvin's liking, and may even have been proposed by his enemies in order to foil him; for two years before, when Bolsec was on trial for opposing Calvin's teaching on predestination, and Calvin wished that he, too, might be condemned to death, a similar appeal had resulted in Bolsec's favor.

Now it happened that on the very morning of the day that the Council ordered the written discussion between Calvin and Servetus, Calvin's enemies had scored a notable point against him in the Council. This seems to have elated Servetus with the belief that he should certainly win his case, and to have bred in him a false sense of security. The written discussion lasted four days. In the name of the Geneva ministers Calvin first drew up a collection of thirty-eight extracts from the books of Servetus, which he offered as "partly impious blasphemies, partly profane and insane errors, and all wholly foreign to the Word of God

and the orthodox faith." These were submitted on their face and without comment. Servetus replied explaining and justifying his positions. Calvin wrote in refutation, and Servetus ended by merely penciling brief notes between the lines or on the margin of Calvin's manuscript. The discussion began on a fairly dignified plane, but Servetus, regarding Calvin as already defeated, soon lost his head, and at length abandoning argument fell into violent abuse and invective, much to the prejudice of his case.[1] Calvin on the contrary kept his poise, and correspondingly strengthened his case. The papers were then submitted to the Council, and were duly forwarded to the churches and Councils of Zürich, Bern, Basel, and Schaffhausen, while Calvin had anticipated this step by writing to the several pastors in order to prepossess them against Servetus.

It was four weeks before the answers were received, and all this time Servetus was languishing in prison. He addressed to the Council an indignant appeal. Calvin, he said, was at the end of his rope, and was keeping him there for spite. Vermin were eating him alive, his clothes were in rags, and he had no change of garments. He again demanded counsel, and appealed his case to the Council of Two Hundred. The leader of the opposition to Calvin supported his appeal, but nothing came of it. A week later Servetus, still sure of his cause, demanded that Calvin himself be imprisoned as a false accuser, on pain of death if found guilty, and he brought six charges against him. This request was ignored like the rest. Finally, after wait-

[1] Thus he repeatedly calls Calvin impudent, ignorant, know-nothing, ridiculous, sophist, madman, sycophant, rascal, beast, monster, criminal, murderer, Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:9–11) nineteen times, and says "you lie" over fifty times. It was the pleasant custom of the age in religious controversy, and Calvin himself was a past master in the use of it upon occasion.

ing more than three weeks, he again made a pitiful appeal for the clothes he needed, being now ill and suffering from the cold; and this request was at last granted.

The replies from the churches at length arrived. The Councils had with one accord referred the matter to their pastors, and the latter, though expressing themselves in differing terms and in guarded language, urged that Servetus was plainly guilty, and that all due means ought to be used to rid the churches of him, especially lest they get a bad reputation for harboring heretics. In the face of such unanimous advice there was but one action to be taken, and after a few days' delay it was voted that Servetus be condemned to be taken to the suburb of Champel and there be burned alive the following day, together with his books. Burning had for centuries been the penalty for heresy under the law of the Empire, and when Calvin revised the laws at Geneva he had let this law stand unchanged. In the present case he tried to get beheading substituted for burning, but the matter had passed beyond his control. When the sentence was announced to Servetus he broke down completely, for he had expected acquittal, or at the worst only banishment; but he soon regained composure, sent for Calvin, and begged his forgiveness. Farel, minister at Neuchatel, had that morning arrived at Calvin's desire. He tried to get Servetus to renounce his errors and thus save his life. But Servetus remained true to his convictions, only begging for another form of death, lest the suffering at the stake cause him at last weakly to recant. Farel accompanied him to the place of execution, where a large crowd had gathered, and there he died with a prayer upon his lips (October 27, 1553); but the details are too horrible to be related here.

Even during the trial of Servetus a few voices had been

raised in his behalf, one of them that of an Italian jurist, Gribaldo, who was in Geneva at the time, and of whom we shall hear more in the next chapter; while David Joris wrote from Basel to the governments of the Protestant cities of Switzerland urging them to avert his fate. But only the Anabaptists as yet disapproved the repression of heresy by force; and anything that Erasmus, Luther, Zwingli, or Calvin might earlier have said in favor of the milder treatment of heretics, or that had this very year been urged by Calvin in behalf of five young Protestants from Lausanne on trial for their life before the Inquisition at Lyon, was assiduously forgotten. The leading reformers without exception strongly approved the execution of Servetus, and Melanchthon called it "a pious example, which deserved to be remembered to all posterity." Calvin himself never expressed the slightest regret for it; but Catholics did not forget, and for generations afterwards whenever Protestants complained of Catholic treatment of Protestant heretics, they retorted by pointing to Calvin's treatment of Servetus.

Servetus's ashes were not cold before there began a general revulsion of public feeling over the affair, and a bitter indignation against Calvin for his part in it. The Council at once dismissed the charges pending against the printer of the *Restitutio*, who had fallen into their hands. Calvin was naturally the object of the bitterest attacks, even in Geneva: "the dogs are now barking at me on all sides," he wrote; and in Protestant Basel he was said to be detested almost more than in Catholic Paris. Within two months from Servetus's death, Calvin was driven almost to the point of leaving Geneva. Forced to defend himself, he published early the next year a *Defense of the Orthodox Faith on the Holy Trinity, against the Prodigious Errors of Michael*

Servetus,[1] in which after defending the capital punishment of heretics on general grounds he undertook to set forth Servetus in the most odious light. This did nothing to raise Calvin in general esteem, and it was soon far more than offset by an anonymous work on the punishment of heretics, a noble plea for tolerance generally attributed to Châtillon (Castellio), who some years before had had friction with Calvin at Geneva and was now at Basel; while this in turn was followed by an answer from Calvin's admiring friend Beza. In fact, by these and other writings, the whole question of the punishment or the toleration of heretics was now opened for discussion, and with the most salutary result. For while heretics were for a long time still occasionally put to death in Protestant countries, from this time forth opposition to the practice steadily increased. Thus it may be said that if the writings of Servetus had a great and lasting influence toward undermining belief in the Athanasian doctrine of the Trinity, his death had a yet more important influence in opening the way for religious liberty of thought and speech.

In judging this whole affair one must take care not to be unjust toward Calvin, by being as narrow and unsympathetic toward him as he was toward Servetus. For he deserves to be judged by the standards of his own age rather than of ours, even though we condemn those in comparison with our own. Besides being a man of extraordinary ability, he had many of the finest traits of personal character. He has been called the father of popular education and the inventor of free schools. Protestantism owes him more than any other man after Luther, and for more than three centuries he remained the leader of its thought outside the Lutheran churches. But he took his office very seriously,

[1] Also cited as *Déclaration, Fidelis Expositio,* and *Refutatio.*

and so wholly identified himself with his cause that he took attacks upon himself as equivalent to attacks upon the Christian religion; and when one had seemed to him to commit an offense against the honor of God, or to endanger the salvation of immortal souls, he would never forgive nor make allowances, but would pursue his opponent vindictively, relentlessly, and without pity. This should help us to explain, if not to excuse, his attitude toward Servetus, and even his willingness so treacherously to betray him to the authorities at Vienne.

Servetus, on the other hand, was in controversy self-conceited, obstinate, fanatical, insulting, and exasperating to the last degree, and by his own manner brought upon himself no small part of what he suffered.[1] Though a man of brilliant and versatile talents, he held, along with the most advanced ideas, others that bordered on the superstitious and made some think him half mad. Yet at bottom he was a sincere and reverent Christian, prizing the Bible far above all other books, devoutly attached to Jesus, who to him was all in all, and willing for the sake of what he held true to be faithful even unto death. Three centuries and a half have squared accounts between him and Calvin. Persecution has been condemned and toleration vindicated. Servetus's heresy has steadily gained upon Calvin's orthodoxy until at Geneva itself Calvin's creed has long since been laid aside, and an expiatory monument has been erected by Calvin's followers near the spot where Servetus perished[2]; while in four cities[3] of Europe where in 1553 he would not have been permitted to live, statues of him now stand to honor his memory.

[1] Coleridge wrote, "If ever any poor fanatic thrust himself into the flames, that man was Servetus."

[2] Dedicated on the 350th anniversary of his death.

[3] Paris, Vienne, Annemasse near Geneva, Madrid.

CHAPTER XIII

ANTITRINITARIANISM AT GENEVA AFTER SERVETUS, 1553–1566

It might naturally be supposed that after the execution of Servetus opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity would have been at an end in Switzerland, or at all events at Geneva, and that any still entertaining doubts of that doctrine would have kept them profoundly to themselves. Such did not at all prove to be the case. Calvin and his sympathizers soon discoverd that they had only "scotched the snake, not killed it." There was, as we have seen, a growing sentiment in favor of religious toleration, and the death of Servetus had without doubt caused persons of independent mind to inquire more widely and deeply than before whether the doctrine of the Trinity were true or not; and of all places it was right at Geneva itself, under Calvin's very nose, that while the ashes of Servetus were still warm the discussion again broke out.

This new outbreak took place among the Italian refugees, who were somewhat protected from Calvin's observation by the fact that they formed a community more or less separate from the native Genevese, and that they spoke a foreign tongue. When Ochino escaped from Italy to Geneva in 1542 he found already there a considerable number of his countrymen, refugees who had been kindly received by Calvin, and he preached to them in Italian until he left Geneva in 1545. The sermons were followed by free discussion on

the part of the members, and this must have opened dangerous opportunities for any heretic to express his mind. A few years later an Italian church was regularly organized. Though most of its members were strictly orthodox, some of them were inclined to be liberal; and during and after the trial of Servetus several of them leaned to his side and denounced his execution. These latter were of course cautious about expressing their views too openly; but they did not conceal them when in conversation with trusted friends. Their general objection to the doctrine of the Trinity was that it was incomprehensible and unreasonable, and that it was self-contradictory. There were four persons who were prominent above the others in this movement, Gribaldo, Biandrata, Alciati, and Gentile; and we shall have separately to see what they did and what befel them.

Matteo Gribaldo was regarded by Calvin as the source of the heresies in the Italian church at Geneva. He was a native of Piedmont, and of his early life nothing is known; but in mature life he was a noted jurist, who lectured upon law at various universities of France and Italy, and especially at the University of Padua. Though he embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, he managed for some years to keep them to himself enough to escape the eye of the Inquisition. At length in 1555 he found the heresy-hunters on his trail, and resisting every inducement of honor and distinction offered him if he would only conform to the Church, he gave up his profession at Padua and withdrew to Switzerland, where he had some years before purchased an estate at Farges near Geneva, which he had often visited in the summers. He was at Geneva, as we have seen, while the trial of Servetus was in progress, and had then frankly expressed his disapproval of capital punishment for heresy, and had in vain sought an interview on the subject with

Calvin which the latter, suspicious of Gribaldo's orthodoxy, declined. Being at Geneva again the following summer, at the Italian church he expressed his views as to the Trinity so freely as to cause no little offense, for it was clear that he was practically an Arian.

Upon his withdrawal from Padua, a year later, Gribaldo had no sooner arrived in Switzerland than he was invited to the chair of law at the University of Tübingen. On his way thither he again visited his friends at Geneva, and this time it was Calvin who sought a conference with him in the presence of some of the church officers; but when Calvin refused to shake hands with him, as a man under suspicion of heresy, Professor Gribaldo at once left the room in anger. He was required, however, to make a statement of his views before the Council, and in this, despite his care not to compromise himself, he let fall some words which were construed as heretical. Enough. He was forthwith expelled from the city.

Upon going to Tübingen he was received with great distinction; but the relentless Calvin pursued him thither, warning one of his colleagues against him as a conceited and dangerous enemy of the faith, and Beza did the same. Complaint was made to his ruler, the Duke of Württemberg, and Gribaldo was brought to answer for his errors before the university senate. He asked for three weeks in which to prepare his answer, but used the time to make good his escape. He fled to his home at Farges, but the Duke got the authorities of Bern, in whose territory it lay, to arrest him. At length, as the less of two evils, he consented to subscribe an orthodox creed and abjure his errors, after which he was required to leave the city within half a year. Meanwhile his wife died, and he besought the government to allow him to remain with his seven motherless children. The re-

quest was granted, on condition that he keep quiet. A year or two later he was lecturing again at Grenoble, but it was only a short time before religious persecution drove him also from here; and after a few more troubled years he was carried off by the plague at Farges in 1564, the same year in which Calvin also died.

While Gribaldo had been only an occasional and brief visitor at Geneva, Biandrata, Alciati, and Gentile were residents there and members of the Italian church. They agreed substanitally with Gribaldo and with one another in holding that the doctrine of the Trinity accords with neither Scripture nor reason, and they seem to have derived their views from Servetus. Of these three the one by far the most distinguished in the history of Unitarianism was Dr. Giorgio Biandrata.[1] He was born of noble family at Saluzzo in Piedmont about 1515, studied medicine and taught it at the Universities of Montpellier and Pavia, and was renowned as one of the best medical writers of his time. While yet a comparatively young man, his reputation was such that he was chosen court physician to the Italian Queen Bona Sforza of Poland, and later served her daughter, Princess Isabella of Transylvania, in the same capacity. He was a very clever and crafty man, and won great personal influence at both courts.

Returning from Poland to Italy in 1551 he practiced his profession for a time at Pavia, and later on in the Grisons he met Renato.[2] But having become infected with the ideas of the Reformation he had in 1556 to flee from the Inquisition, and came to Geneva, where he joined the Italian church and for a time lived quietly. The discussion then in progress as to the Trinity seemed to trouble him, and he often

[1] The Latin form of the name, Blandrata, is also used.

[2] See pages 76–77.

resorted to Calvin for light. He would come away each time apparently satisfied, only to return later with new questions. At last Calvin's patience was out, and half suspecting the sincerity of Biandrata's questions he refused to have anything more to do with him. This suspicion was probably justified; for after Gribaldo had been banished, Biandrata and Alciati assumed leadership in the attacks upon the doctrine of the Trinity. So many members of the Italian church became dangerously infected that the pastor on his death-bed in 1557 implored Calvin to take the matter in hand and root out the heresy. Calvin willingly complied, and the next year, after other attempts had proved ineffectual, a very strict confession of faith was drawn up, directed especially against these errors; and after lengthy discussion, in which Biandrata and Alciati passionately opposed the Trinity, it was voted to require all the members to sign the confession and to promise to adhere strictly to it in future. Six of the members refused to sign but afterwards yielded, Alciati and Biandrata apparently among them; they continued nevertheless secretly to discuss the matter with susceptible persons, and hence they together with others were ere long called before the officers of the church. They were promised immunity from punishment if they would only preserve the peace; but soon afterwards Biandrata, scenting immediate danger, took hasty flight, going first to Gribaldo at Farges and then to Zürich, where he found so little sympathy that he was advised to leave the city. He therefore returned to practice his profession in Poland; and we shall later see how he became practically the founder of the Unitarian movement in that country and in Transylvania.

Giovanni Paolo Alciati, Biandrata's companion in this controversy, was another Piedmontese of noble birth, who

had formerly been a soldier in the service of Milan. Before coming to Geneva he had been in the Grisons with Biandrata and Renato, and had also been a correspondent of Paleario.[1] He was rude of speech, and in the discussion referred to above he declared that in the Trinity Calvin worshiped three devils, worse than all the idols of the Papacy. He was about to be arrested when he fled with Biandrata, and when bidden to return he declared he would not set foot in Geneva so long as Calvin lived. He was therefore deprived of his citizenship, and permanently banished from Geneva under pain of death. Two others were also banished at about the same time. Alciati soon joined Biandrata in Poland and assisted him in spreading antitrinitarian views there, and was later active in the same cause in Moravia. The end of his life was spent at Danzig, which became one of the seats of Antitrinitarianism in Prussian Poland, where he was its first recorded adherent.

One more of the Geneva Antitrinitarians remains to be mentioned, Giovanni Valentino Gentile, whom Beza considered the fountainhead of all the disturbances in the Geneva church, and who for his adventurous life and tragic death deserves to be considered as second only to Servetus among Unitarian martyrs. He was a native of Calabria and was well educated, and had formerly been a teacher. He too had been in the circle of Valdez at Naples. Becoming too much of a Protestant to remain safely in Italy, he came to Geneva about 1556, attracted by the reputation of Calvin, and here became more and more inclined to the antitrinitarian faction in the church. He was one of the six that at first refused to sign Calvin's creed, and were later persuaded to do so; but after Biandrata's flight from Geneva, Gentile felt

[1] See page 72.

driven by his conscience boldly to bear witness to the truth of God as he saw it. He therefore made no secret of his opinion that Calvin's doctrine really made a Quaternity of four divine beings, instead of a Trinity of three,[1] and showed that he was himself fundamentally an Arian. The Council took his case in hand, required a formal statement of his beliefs, imprisoned him, denied him (like Servetus) legal counsel, and finally declared him worthy of death as a heretic. It was not until he had been condemned to be beheaded (Geneva was not likely now to invite further criticism by burning another heretic at the stake, and even this sentence of Gentile aroused general indignation) that he saw that if he would live he must unequivocally renounce all his errors. Having at length done this he was recommended to the mercy of his judges. He was therefore required to undergo a humiliating form of punishment in vogue at the time and known as the *amende honorable:* he was obliged barefoot and bareheaded, clad only in a shirt, and preceded by trumpeters, to march through the streets with lighted torch in hand, and then on his knees to confess his crime, burn his writings with his own hand, and beg the forgiveness of the magistrates; and he had to take oath not to leave the city without permission.

At the first opportunity he broke the oath thus forced from him, and fled to Gribaldo at Farges, and soon after that to Lyon, where he published an *Antidota* to Calvin's doctrine, which he attacked without reserve as fantastic and sophistical. Ill health and his poverty soon caused him to go to Grenoble to seek the hospitality of Gribaldo who was now lecturing there. Being soon called to account by the Catholic authorities here, he proved to them that his attacks had been made only against Calvin and the Reformed

[1] Following Servetus, see page 61.

Church, whereat they were so well pleased that they let him go. He thought it safer however to return to Farges, where he was soon arrested and imprisoned again, though upon giving his promise to remain quiet he was set at liberty. Returning to Lyon he published another writing attacking the doctrine of Calvin, was again arrested on suspicion of heresy, and again satisfied the Catholic authorities that his opposition was rather against Calvin than against the doctrine of the Trinity (which was probably more than half the truth), and after fifty days' imprisonment was once more set free. After all these troubles he was ready to accept the invitation of Biandrata to come to Poland and help him spread Antitrinitarianism there, and thither he went in 1563 together with Alciati.

The poor man could nowhere long escape persecution. Calvin at once wrote letters warning the Polish churches against him, and in 1566 a severe edict against heretics was passed which made it necessary for him to flee to Moravia. Here he sought an Anabaptist community in which many Antitrinitarians during this period found refuge, but he did not remain long. Whether he was fatally attracted to danger as a moth to flame, or whether he thought that with Calvin now dead, and several of the other leading reformers lately carried off by the plague which in Switzerland had swept away some 38,000, he might now with better success proclaim the doctrine he had so much at heart, he returned again to Farges, only to find that his friend Gribaldo had died of the plague.

With almost fanatical self-confidence Gentile now challenged all the Protestant theologians of France and Savoy to a public debate on the doctrine of the Trinity, the loser to be punished by death! The challenge was ignored, but again, and for the last time, he was arrested as a heretic.

He claimed in defense that he had not attacked the true scriptural Trinity, but only the false Trinity of Calvin. After five weeks in prison at Gex he was removed to the seat of government at Bern. Feeling was very tense there on account of a recent outbreak of Anabaptism, and Gentile was suspected of being also an Anabaptist. Various churches and universities in Germany had already publicly condemned his teachings as Arian. Beza, who had now succeeded Calvin in Geneva, wrote to urge action against him, and the reformers of Bern and Zürich did the same. He was charged with seven specific errors as to the Trinity, and confessed them all, but defended them as the truth. He was charged also with disrespect for sacred things, and with having violated his oath at Geneva. After a month's time, as he could not be brought to renounce his errors, he was condemned to be beheaded. Even on his way to execution he charged the clergy who attended him with being Sabellians,[1] and declared that he died (1566) as a witness to the honor of the most high God. But so thoroughly had all open sympathy with the doctrines of Servetus now been suppressed in Switzerland, that hardly a voice was raised in protest save at Basel; and even there it was perhaps as much because political feeling was then strained between Basel and the rest of Switzerland as because of any strong sentiment in favor of religious toleration; for it will be remembered that it was at Basel that only a few years before this the body of David Joris had been taken from its grave and burnt.[2]

Thus in this part of Switzerland, as in the other countries of which we have spoken, Antitrinitarianism was violently put down, and nothing more was heard of it for many gen-

[1] See page 15.
[2] See page 49.

erations; for in the same year in which Gentile perished, most of the Swiss Protestant churches adopted the Helvetic Confession which ere long was also adopted by the Reformed Churches of France, Hungary, and Poland; and thus these churches were henceforth committed to a strict and unchanging form of religious thought much as the early Christian Church had been at Constantinople in 381.[1] There had been, however, during this same period, a milder struggle for freedom of belief going on in other Swiss cities than Geneva and Bern, and we must therefore next follow the story of that at Zürich and at Basel.

[1] See page 24.

CHAPTER XIV

ANTITRINITARIAN TENDENCIES AT ZÜRICH AND AT BASEL, 1553–1572

Geneva was not the only Swiss city where there were Italian refugees, or where there were seeds of heresy trying to sprout. Zürich, the home of Zwingli, who had founded the Reformation in Switzerland, had long been a favorite refuge for Italian Protestants, when in 1555 their number was suddenly increased by a whole congregation at once. There had been a flourishing young Protestant church at Locarno in Italian Switzerland; and when the Catholic government there at length required them either to give up their faith or to leave the city, they unhesitatingly decided to do the latter. A few of them stopped in the Grisons, where they were made welcome; but the most of them, some six or eight score, went at once to Zürich, where they were hospitably received, were granted a church of their own for Italian worship, and were aided from public funds. Now it happened that just as they were looking for a minister Ochino was near by at Basel, and the Locarno church thought themselves most happy when he accepted their unanimous call.

We last took leave of Ochino at Geneva in 1545. Since then he had had a varied and interesting life. From Geneva he had gone to Augsburg where for two years he preached to an Italian congregation. When it became unsafe under a Catholic government for him longer to stay

there, he went to England, at the urgent invitation of Archbishop Cranmer, and for nearly six years preached to an Italian congregation in London. All this time he was on the one hand publishing volumes of sermons to be circulated in his dear Italy, where he might no longer preach in person, and was on the other hand becoming acquainted with distinguished Protestants, among them Princess (later Queen) Elizabeth, to whom he dedicated one of his books. But the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary made it necessary for him to leave England, and he returned to Switzerland, arriving at Geneva, so the tradition runs, on the very day after the execution of Servetus. After a brief visit to Chiavenna, and about a year's residence at Basel, he was called to Zürich, as said above.

Ochino was now sixty-eight years old, and deserved a life of quiet retirement; but he accepted his call to new labors without hesitation. For eight years he discharged his office faithfully and with energy, and was held in universal esteem. Although it is possible to imagine in some of his writings before now a faint tinge of heresy, his orthodoxy had never been called in question by Protestants. But in 1563 he published two volumes of *Dialogues*, which soon brought him into trouble, for one of them was interpreted as arguing in favor of polygamy. This was then a tender subject in the Protestant world, for one of the Protestant princes, Philip of Hesse, had some years previously contracted a polygamous marriage, and had been defended by Luther for it; whereupon Catholics had taken advantage of the situation by calling attention to the demoralizing effects of the Protestant religion.

The Protestant government of Zürich did not propose to bear the weight of another such scandal. Without having granted him even a trial, the magistrates condemned Ochino

to banishment within three weeks. At the edge of winter, and at the age of seventy-six, with his four motherless children, he was obliged to set forth. Refused residence at Basel and also at Mühlhausen, he was permitted to stay the winter out at Nuremberg, though forbidden to remain there longer. In May he arrived in Poland, where he already had numerous friends and correspondents. Here at least he had hoped to be unmolested, and he commenced preaching to an Italian congregation in the capital, at Krakow. But the Catholics had never forgiven their most distinguished preacher for leaving the Church. Within three months they secured from a compliant government a decree that all foreign preachers who were spreading the Protestant religion should leave the country. The decree was aimed especially at Ochino—in fact, he is said to have been the only one to whom it was applied at the time. Nobles interceded for him in vain. Before he could leave he was stricken down with the plague. Three of his four children died of it. With his one remaining daughter he was finally able late in the year to travel. One refuge still remained when all others had failed. It was among the Anabaptists of Moravia. Thither he turned his faltering steps, and having reached them he died within three weeks at Slavkov (Austerlitz), in his seventy-eighth year.

In the winter after he was driven from Zürich, Ochino prepared an apology to the ministers of that city, in which he defended himself and attacked them. They replied with *A Sponge to Wipe out the Aspersions Cast by Ochino*, in which they ransacked his writings for materials to justify their treatment of him; and it was not until now that it occurred to them to charge him with unsoundness as to the Trinity. Two of his *Dialogues* had been on that subject; and in those, although he appeared to be defending the doc-

trine, the arguments which he put into the mouth of the attack were so much stronger than those that he put into the mouth of the defense, that there certainly was some color in the charge that he really meant by this means to undermine a doctrine in which he no longer much believed. He was unsound also on the doctrine of the atonement. At all events, he had expressed strong disapproval of the execution of Servetus; at Zürich he had been intimate with Lælius Socinus, whose part in the movement we have next to notice; and we find him in Poland associating with the party which was rapidly developing antitrinitarian views there, and taking part in one of their synods; while it was with the antitrinitarian Paruta [1] that he found his last refuge in Moravia. For these reasons his name seems to belong in the history of this movement, in which his writings had important influence.

Lælius Socinus (Lelio Sozini) is one whose name has shone by reflected light from his far more famous nephew Faustus, of whom we shall hear much in connection with the Unitarian movement in Poland. He was born at Siena in 1525, of a family of very distinguished jurists, and connected by family ties with one of the Popes. He was educated in law at Padua and Bologna, and early went over to the Reformation. He was for a time at Venice, though no good evidence is extant that, as is sometimes alleged, he belonged to the antitrinitarian movement there. In 1547 he came to Chiavenna and met Renato, who apparently had a profound influence on the development of the young man's thought. He next spent some time in travel in the Protestant lands of northern Europe—Switzerland, France, England, Holland,

[1] Nicola Paruta was a nobleman of Lucca, and one of the Anabaptists in the Venetian territory. He came from Venice to Geneva in 1560, and later was in Poland and Moravia, and in Transylvania, where a catechism which he prepared was used by the Unitarians.

and Germany. Everywhere his family name and his attractive manner and character won him friends among the distinguished, and he enjoyed the friendship and received the praise of Calvin, Melanchthon, and other leading reformers. He was apparently trying to reorganize his religious thought, and wherever he went was full of questions about points of doctrine; but although these at times aroused misgivings as to whether he was not becoming tinged with heresy, he never wholly lost the confidence of even Calvin.

In 1549, after further travels to Poland, Moravia, and Italy, he returned to Switzerland and finally settled down at Zürich as the safest place for a man of inquiring mind; for during his absence in Italy Servetus had been put to death at Geneva, and of this Socinus so strongly disapproved that he was suspected of being the author of the bitter attack which was soon afterwards made against Calvin.[1] After a time complaints began to reach Zürich that Socinus was heretical as to the Trinity, and he was therefore called to account. Yet he had been regarded as orthodox enough to be chosen one of the elders of the Italian church when it arrived from Locarno, and had been one of the two chosen to take to Basel its invitation to Ochino, whom he had previously met in England; and he now gave a satisfactory explanation of his views, and wrote out a confession of his faith which was accepted. Henceforth, however, he became more and more reserved in expressing his views, save to trusted Italian friends; and although his doubts as to the received creeds are likely to have strengthened rather than grown weaker, yet he gave no open ground for complaint. When in 1562 he died at the early age of thirty-seven, his papers fell to his nephew, Faustus, and the latter, adopting and expanding the ideas he had found in

[1] See page 99.

these, became some twenty years later the leader of the Unitarians in Poland, and the author of their system of doctrine. It is thus that Lælius Socinus has sometimes been called "the patriarch of Socinianism," though so far as we can now discover his influence upon it has been greatly overestimated.

Another member of the Zürich church, however, who was less guarded in expressing his views than Socinus and Ochino had been, was Antonio Maria Besozzo, a Milanese gentleman and teacher who had joined himself to the exiles from Locarno, and had been a close friend of Socinus. Some heresy hunters lit upon some things he had said in conversation, magnified them, and laid the matter before the Council. He was judged guilty of the heresies of Servetus and Ochino, and, being permanently banished from the place, together with his wife he withdrew to Basel in 1565. This was the end of Antitrinitarianism at Zürich.

At Basel, the other Swiss town of which we have to speak, there was no separate Italian church, though a notable company of Italians of liberal mind found a home in the church of the Protestants. Basel was the chief home of scholarship in Switzerland, and the best scholars of Europe resorted thither; interested, after the manner of scholars, not so much in particular doctrines as in general liberty of thought and conscience. Erasmus had left his liberalizing spirit behind him here, and the press was uncommonly free. Here Servetus had at first found sympathy; Ochino had lived here; Faustus Socinus had here spent four important years of his life; David Joris had found Basel the most tolerant place to which to flee from persecution,[1] and from here had written his noteworthy letter urging that Servetus's life

[1] See page 48.

be spared.[1] It was also here that Châtillon in the year after Servetus's death wrote his stinging inquiry as to whether heretics were to be put to death;[2] and here that Mino Celso[3] in 1577 raised another powerful voice against persecution. The principle of perfect freedom of belief in religion is an even more important mark of Unitarianism than is any particular doctrine; Basel therefore deserves to be remembered in this history because it was at this period the place above all others where religious toleration was most strongly advocated.

Besides those named above, whose influence (much to Calvin's disgust) made Basel more hospitable to freedom of religious thought than were the other Swiss cities, one other person may have special mention. Celio Secondo Curione was born of noble family in Piedmont in 1503, the youngest of a family of twenty-four children, and was early left an orphan. He was educated at the University of Turin, and as one of the disciples of Valdez became attached to the doctrines of the Reformation. After teaching for some time at the universities of Pavia and Lucca he fell under the eye of the Inquisition in 1542 and fled the country, spending some time in the Grisons with Renato on his way to Switzerland, where he soon became Rector of the University of Lausanne. Later on as Professor of Eloquence at Basel he attracted large numbers of students, and until his death in 1569 was admired as one of the most learned of the Italian refugees. As early as 1549 he published a work on Chris-

[1] See page 98.

[2] See page 99.

[3] He was of Siena, and when well on in years left Italy for safety in Switzerland, and after spending some time in the Grisons he came in 1569 to Basel. He has sometimes been claimed as an Antitrinitarian, and was certainly of liberal mind.

tian doctrine in which he significantly avoided reference to the doctrine of the Trinity; and in the following year he attended the Anabaptist Council at Venice. In another work he maintained the comfortable doctrine that the great majority of men will be saved. And since he was friendly with Cellarius, Biandrata, Gribaldo, Ochino, Socinus, Stancaro, Châtillon, and other Antitrinitarians, and since he opposed the burning of Servetus and was regarded by Calvin as a Servetian, it is fair to presume him an Antitrinitarian at heart, even if not an outspoken one.

We have reached the end of our survey of the first scattered beginnings of Unitarianism in Europe. We have seen that during the first half-century after Luther, in all the countries in Western Europe where the Reformation took root (save England, of which we shall speak separately in later chapters), there were independent spirits who were not satisfied to stop where the leading reformers had stopped in their reform of the Church, but who wished to carry it further and thoroughly to reform the doctrines of Christianity, so that they might be based only on the teachings of the Bible and might not give offense to reason. These were the earliest Unitarians in Europe; or rather, they were the first to take those steps away from the orthodox doctrines of Christianity about God, Christ, the atonement, and related doctrines, which led at length to modern Unitarianism. Why did not their movement succeed better? The answer is plain to see. None of them was long permitted to proclaim his views unmolested. We have seen that in every instance thus far the penalty of denying the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Deity of Christ was bitter persecution—banishment, imprisonment, even death itself. One can hardly refrain from applying to these the words of the New Testa-

ment written of heroes of faith of an earlier time,[1] "who through faith quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; while others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy." None of these was permitted to live a peaceful life, and not a few suffered tragic deaths. The conscience and mind of man were not yet free in Protestant Europe, any more than in Catholic. The laws of the State were used to repress freedom of thought and free speech within the Church. Those that escaped death wandered over the face of Europe, happy if they might at last find somewhere a quiet corner to die in. Is it any wonder that Unitarianism did not spread faster? Indeed Unitarian views of Christianity would have come to an end almost in the generation in which they arose, had there not been in eastern Europe two remote countries where broader religious toleration prevailed, and where Unitarians might under the law in some measure enjoy equal rights with other Protestants. For the further development of our subject, promoted by some of those whom we have seen driven out of Italy and Switzerland, we have next, therefore, to turn to Poland and Transylvania.

[1] Hebrews 11:33–38.

DIVISION III

UNITARIANISM IN POLAND

CHAPTER XV

THE BEGINNINGS OF ANTITRINITARIANISM IN POLAND, DOWN TO 1565

Thus far our history has been a story of oft-repeated failure and frequent tragedy. Wherever thinkers or preachers arose, alike in Catholic lands and in Protestant, and whether in Italy and France, or in Switzerland, Germany, and Holland, who were independent enough and daring enough to appeal to the Scriptures, or to the early Fathers of the Christian Church, or to reason, against the orthodox doctrines about God and Christ, there they were inevitably called to account by both Church and State, and forced either to recant and relapse into silence, or else to suffer banishment, imprisonment, or martyrdom. The movement was thus effectually suppressed throughout all western Europe. From all this depressing story we can now turn to a happier one, in spite of its still being often darkened by the shadows of persecution and death, in two countries of eastern Europe, where laws were more tolerant, and the State was less subservient to the will of the Church.

The first of these countries was Poland. Poland was, in the age of the Reformation, a great and powerful monarchy, a little larger than the state of Texas, and one of the most free and enlightened nations of Europe. Its capital, Krakow, boasted a celebrated university, the second oldest in all Europe, which had given the world Copernicus and other famous scholars; while its metropolis

(and later capital), Warsaw, was called "the Paris of the East." The Poles were a people of uncertain origin, a part of that great Slavic stock which has for centuries occupied the east and southeast of Europe. By the ninth century the wandering tribes had become a nation with a hereditary monarchy; toward the end of the fourteenth century the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was united to Poland under the crown of the famous Jagiello dynasty; and when this dynasty became extinct in 1572, the monarchy became elective, whence its people have often loved to call it a republic. The real power of government was henceforth in the hands of the nobility, a class comprising about a tenth of the population, and including all men who owned land or whose ancestors had owned it. The nobles were supposed to have equal political rights, and only they might vote. The magnates, or more powerful nobles, owned vast tracts of country, including cities and villages, and held nearly absolute sway over all upon their estates. Laws were made by their delegates meeting in Diets. The nobles were proverbially quarrelsome and jealous of one another; so that neighboring nations, taking advantage of the weakness resulting from these internal discords, eventually fell upon Poland and carved it to pieces in three successive divisions (1772, 1793, and 1795), distributing it all among Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Thus for a century and a quarter Poland was extinct, save in the hearts of its children, until as a result of the World War it has again been reëstablished among the nations.

Poland had accepted Christianity in the tenth century, and Lithuania had done so upon its union with Poland; but the nobles were little inclined to allow foreign interference with their affairs, and for centuries after the Catholic Church had gained an almost absolute sway in western Eu-

rope, its hold in Poland was but feeble. Even before Luther the doctrines of the Waldenses and of Hus had largely undermined its influence; and although laws against heresy had indeed been passed, they were but little enforced, so that the Reformation early and easily took root here. The Protestant faith was introduced in several different forms, by the Lutheran Church, the Reformed Church (Calvinists), the Bohemian Brethren (Hussites), and the Anabaptists—the latter without separate organization, but as a sort of leaven, especially among the Reformed. Of all these the Reformed Church was the most influential, chiefly among the nobility, and with it the Bohemian Brethren soon formed a union. With the active sympathy of many of the nobles, the Reformation spread rapidly and widely. Synods of the Catholic Church passed ordinances against Protestantism, but they could not be enforced. By the middle of the sixteenth century the power of Catholicism had been broken, and at length over two thousand Catholic churches became Protestant, and an overwhelming majority of both houses of the national Diet were of the reformed faith. King Sigismund Augustus II (1548–1572), though Catholic, was tolerant, and refused to persecute Dissidents (as all non-Catholics came to be called), saying that he wished to be king of both sheep and goats; and immediately after his death the Diet passed in 1573 a law guaranteeing equal protection and rights to all citizens without regard to differences of religious faith, and this law later kings, when they received the crown, were repeatedly required to promise to maintain. When upon one occasion a candidate for the throne, being an intense Catholic, demurred about taking oath to maintain this law, he was sternly told, *Si non jurabis non regnabis*—If you do not swear, you shall not be king; and he had to submit.

The first recorded instance of Antitrinitarianism in Poland, however, is found not in Protestant but in Catholic circles, and the account of it has come to us in a curious story. There was at Krakow in 1546 a little group of liberal Catholic scholars who used to meet together privately to discuss the Protestant doctrines then so rife. The leader of the number was Francesco Lismanino, head of the Franciscan Order in Poland, and confessor to Queen Bona, who being Italian, had obtained some of Ochino's sermons and given them to him to read. At one of their meetings there appeared a Dutchman who passed under the name of Spiritus, and who, in turning over a book of prayers in the library of his host, and finding some of them addressed to each of the three persons of the Trinity, inquired whether, then, they had three Gods. The subject was soon broken off, but not until it had made a deep impression on those present, of whom several later became Antitrinitarians. Other influences also worked in the same direction. Servetus's little books on the Trinity had already been much read in Poland; Lælius Socinus [1] had visited Lismanino at Krakow in 1549; Stancaro,[2] who had come to the University there as Professor of Hebrew, created much stir a little later by teaching that Christ was our mediator only through his human nature, and by thus ignoring his divinity paved the way for doubt of the Trinity, and opened a discussion which agitated the new reformers for five or six years; and undoubtedly, since Poland enjoyed closest relations with Italian culture, other Italian heretics secretly came thither or spread their views through their writings. Thus the soil was prepared for the development we are to follow.

Upon the Lutheran Church in Poland, Antitrinitarianism

[1] See page 114.

[2] See page 77.

never made any impression, but in the Reformed Church in Little Poland and Lithuania it made such rapid headway that for a time it seemed likely to win the day. Young nobles and ministers attending the universities of Germany, Switzerland, or Italy learned of the teachings of Servetus and brought them home for discussion. The first public attack on the doctrine of the Trinity was made by a young minister named Peter of Goniondz (Gonesius). He had been sent abroad to prepare himself for the priesthood, but while studying not only had become Protestant, but in Switzerland had discovered the teachings of Servetus, and for advocating them at Wittenberg he had been forced by Melanchthon to leave town. Returning to Poland in 1555 he became a minister in the Reformed Church, and at the synod of Secemin early the following year he made an extended address against the doctrine of the Trinity, accepting only the Apostles' Creed and denying the Nicene and the Athanasian, and offered his views for the judgment of the synod. The members present were so much impressed by what Gonesius had said that for a report upon his views they sent him to Melanchthon at Wittenberg, who strove in vain to convince him of his error.

The new views made rapid progress during the next three years, and when the subject was again discussed at a synod at Pinczow late in 1558, they were found to have won many converts among both the clergy and the nobles. Nevertheless Gonesius was condemned by a majority of the synod, and having therefore to leave the province of Little Poland he went to Lithuania, where now grown bolder in his convictions, he carried his views yet further at a synod at Brest (Brest Litovsk) in 1560, and added to them also some Anabaptist objections against infant baptism, and the lawfulness of bearing arms. Here too the teachings of Stan-

caro and Servetus had prepared the way. The synod, fearing a schism, imposed silence on him, on pain of excommunication; but he had already won to his views numerous distinguished nobles, and with their support went on his way as before.

By far the most important of these was Jan Kiszka, who when a student at Basel had come under the liberalizing influence of Châtillon and Curione, and was thus well prepared for the new views he now heard. He was the second most powerful magnate in all Lithuania, was owner of vast territories, including four hundred villages and seventy cities, and had unbounded influence. He gave his powerful support to Gonesius, and made him minister of the church in his town of Wengrow, which may thus be set down as the first antitrinitarian church in Poland; and he also set up a printing press to further the cause of his faith. Eventually he gave to the Antitrinitarians churches under his control in Lithuania or Podlachia, or built them new ones, to the number of about twenty in all.[1]

It was at Pinczow, however, the chief educational center of the Reformed Church thus far, that the antitrinitarian movement had the most interesting development at this period; and here, by common consent, gathered so many of those that favored it, that before long they came to be known as Pinczovians. The Reformed Church here had from the first

[1] The religion of a church in Poland depended on that of the owner of the estate on which it stood, who was known as its patron; and the minister was appointed, or at least must be approved, by him. In some cases the patron himself became minister. When he died the churches usually followed the faith of the new patron. Thus with the adherence of Kiszka to their cause the Antitrinitarians at once gained a numerous group of churches; in 1592 these returned to the Reformed Church of their new patron. There were many instances of such vicissitudes, and the progress of the new faith largely depended upon the extent to which the great nobles could be won over to it.

been much influenced by Anabaptist tendencies, and was thus disposed to emphasize Scripture more than the creeds; and the long controversy carried on here with Stancaro over the doctrine mentioned above [1] had tended to undermine faith in the Trinity. Biandrata, who had already been in Poland a decade before as court physician to Queen Bona, but had in the meantime been in Italy and in Switzerland whence, as we have seen,[2] he had to flee from Calvin in 1558, in that same year returned to Poland and came to Pinczow, where he found things going very much to his mind. He heard the bold stand taken by Gonesius, and gave him his sympathy. Here too he found Lismanino, who had now for some time been Protestant, wavering as to the doctrine of the Trinity, and won him over to positive disbelief in it. The minister of the Pinczow church and the rector of its school were also converted to the new views. Biandrata, more advanced than the rest in the heresy, soon became virtually the leader of the movement; and by using the most cautious methods of promoting his views, and by taking care to use only the language of Scripture in expressing them, he rapidly won great influence among the churches of Little Poland, so that in 1560 he was chosen elder for the district of Krakow. Calvin heard of this with the greatest dismay, and wrote letters to persons of influence in Poland, warning them against Biandrata as a most unscrupulous and dangerous heretic; but little heed was paid to his warnings. To clear himself from any suspicion, Biandrata was, indeed, required to submit to the synod a statement of his faith; but he did so in phrases of such unimpeachable orthodoxy that all doubts were at once dispelled.

Alciati and Gentile also soon arrived, fresh from their

[1] Page 126.

[2] See pages 104, 105.

persecution by Calvin,[1] and, unhindered by his warnings to the churches against them, they attended synods and took part in the discussions over doctrine. Lælius Socinus paid a flying visit, though perhaps without influencing the course of events; and Ochino [2] later came and for a few months added the eloquence of his voice. The Pinczovians published two confessions of their faith in 1560 and 1561, were enthusiastic and aggressive, and steadily won adherents among both the ministers and the nobles and high officials. The new views gained ground rapidly, and the orthodox took alarm. Frequent synods were held, with the doctrine of the Trinity always up for debate; but as the appeal was always from the doctrine and language of the Creeds to the doctrine of the early Church and the language of Scripture, the orthodox inevitably had the worst of the argument. Each synod showed new gains; and when at the synod of Pinczow in 1562 the liberals had the majority, and voted that ministers should abstain from speaking of the Trinity save in such terms as are used in the Scriptures, the day seemed won. The next year they condemned the doctrine of the Trinity as Sabellian,[3] and composed a new confession.

The most effective preacher of the new views in the province of Little Poland was Gregory Paulus. He had accepted the views of Gonesius when they were first expressed at the synod of 1556, but soon went beyond the Arianism of the latter and regarded Christ as simply human, while he also adopted various Anabaptist views as to baptism and the conduct of a Christian's life. He is said to have been the first in Poland to attack the doctrine of the Trinity from his pulpit at Krakow, where he won over some of the ministers

[1] See pages 105–109.
[2] See page 113.
[3] See page 15.

and most of his own congregation, whose exemplary lives gained them many sympathizers; and backed by the support of a powerful patron he was made minister of a congregation where crowds came to hear him. While he was preaching there one Trinity Sunday against the doctrine of the Trinity, the spire of Trinity church was struck by lightning. The event made a great impression in all quarters; but while the orthodox declared it was an evidence of divine anger, his friends interpreted it as a sign of divine approval of his doctrine.

Though the orthodox party in Little Poland were now in the minority, they were still determined not to yield. Not long after the vote of the synod of Pinczow above referred to, one of their ministers, Stanislaw Sarnicki, jealous over Paulus's advancement in the church, brought against him charges of being an Arian and a follower of Servetus. Paulus defended himself successfully against one charge after another until at length, when it became evident that nothing could be accomplished against him through the existing synod, and Paulus's patron had now died, Sarnicki secretly convened an opposition synod solely of his own party, to which Paulus and his friends were not invited. It disowned the authority of the previous synod, condemned Paulus and his followers as Tritheists,[1] removed him from office, and put Sarnicki in his place. Sarnicki had yet others deprived of their pulpits; but Paulus found a new patron and still continued to preach. All this was in 1563. Further efforts were made to heal the schism, but to no purpose, for the orthodox would not join in them; so that when the next synod met at Mordy later the same year, they would take no part in it.

[1] For holding that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were each God, but that the three were not one. The same charge was made against Gentile.

It must be remembered, however, that there was as yet no separately organized antitrinitarian church; for all that has been related was simply an effort to free the Reformed Church from the bondage of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, and to restore the pure scriptural doctrines of early Christianity.

Biandrata had followed Gonesius from Pinczow to Lithuania, where he had secured the powerful patronage of Prince Nicholas Radziwill, who angrily resented Calvin's attempts to shake his confidence in his guest; and he gave further impulse to the rapidly growing movement in Lithuania. Just at this juncture, however, when what the antitrinitarian movement most wanted was an able leader, Biandrata was invited, in 1563, to go to Transylvania as court physician to the ruling prince, John Sigismund. Doubtless apprehensive as to what Calvin might yet succeed in accomplishing against him, as well as allured by the attractions of a life at court, he accepted the invitation with alacrity. In a later chapter we shall find him founding the Unitarian movement in Transylvania and for a time guiding its destinies, and thus playing a yet more important rôle there than he had played in Poland, where Paulus now became the leader of the movement.

The heresy of these early Antitrinitarians in Poland was of the mildest sort. They insisted on hardly more than that Christ, though he might still be considered God, should be regarded as at least in some slight sense inferior to the Father; and that in stating their faith Christians should abandon the technical terms of the Creeds, and return to the simple words of the Scripture and the teaching of the Ante-Nicene Church. They accepted the Apostles' Creed, and they were sometimes willing even to profess faith in a sort of Trinity—what they called a scriptural Trinity. But, al-

though this was at bottom all a purely speculative question about a fine point in theology—whether the Son were altogether equal with the Father or slightly inferior to him—the orthodox regarded the struggle with Antitrinitarianism as nothing less than a life-and-death matter for their religion, and left no stone unturned to overthrow so dangerous a heresy. To this end they even joined with the Catholics in 1564 to secure a decree of banishment against Antitrinitarians; though, contrary to their expectation, the decree was found instead to apply to all foreign Protestants. They appealed to the king, and it was not actually enforced except against Ochino [1] and perhaps one or two more; but all Protestants were by this act caused to realize their common danger at the hands of the Catholics.

One final attempt, therefore, was made to bring about a settlement of their differences. With the sanction of the king it was arranged that while the national Diet was sitting at Piotrkow in 1565 a formal debate between the two parties should be held, in the presence of the great number of magnates and nobles, as well as of ministers who would be in attendance with their patrons, especially since many had not yet taken sides in the controversy. The conditions of the debate were carefully drawn, disputants were appointed to speak for each side, distinguished nobles served as presiding officers and secretaries. Arguments and answers to them were written out and read on both sides; the Pinczovians appealing only to the authority of Scripture, the orthodox to Scripture, the Fathers, and the Councils. When the debate had lasted for fourteen days with no progress made toward agreement, the orthodox side suddenly broke it off without warning, and, meeting by themselves, voted to have nothing more to do with such obstinate and

[1] See page 113.

incorrigible heretics. They reported their decision to the king, and henceforth refused all approaches for union.

The breach thus made was past all mending, and the antitrinitarian party, being thus shut out from any relations with the orthodox, were forced to form their own separate organization, and all later efforts at reunion proved futile. When a few years afterwards a federation of the several Protestant churches of Poland was formed at Sandomir (the so-called *Consensus Sandomiriensis*, 1570), its primary object was to unite the orthodox bodies on a common basis of faith against "the Tritheists, Ebionites,[1] and Anabaptists," whose spread had so much disturbed their peace; especial care was therefore taken to exclude these from the union, and action was repeatedly taken afterwards to make the exclusion yet more strict. If it be said, however, that all this was a very long time ago, it is proper to remark that very recent religious history in America records the closest parallels to this action of the sixteenth century in Poland; and it sometimes seems as if the orthodox in England and America now were little less exclusive toward those who do not agree with their doctrines than they were in Poland three hundred and fifty years ago.

[1] See page 9.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ORGANIZATION AND GROWTH OF THE ANTITRINITARIAN CHURCHES IN POLAND, 1565–1579

As was seen at the end of the last chapter, the antitrinitarian party were in 1565 excluded from further connection with the orthodox party in the Reformed Church. If they were now still to continue their existence and hold and extend their faith, instead of gradually dying out and being absorbed by other bodies, they had to organize an independent church among themselves; and this they now proceeded to do. The new church was completely organized that same year, with its own synods, ministers, schools, and constitution. It became officially known as the Minor Reformed Church of Poland, though its members preferred to call themselves simply Christians; while their opponents, desiring to fasten upon them the stigma of hated heresies, for the most part called them Arians or Anabaptists. A synod was held at Wengrow at the end of the year, attended by forty-seven of the clergy from all parts of the kingdom, and by fourteen noblemen; and letters of sympathy were received from various distinguished ladies and other persons, as well as from churches in distant parts of the kingdom. The first steps were also taken here for settling disputed questions of doctrine and practice; for it was of course but natural that having laid aside the old creeds, and looking only to Scripture for their authority, they

should for a time come to different views from a book which after all represents so many different points of view. And that the more, since they had as yet no leader who by his influence was able to direct the whole church and impress on it a common faith or policy. For even before the church was fairly organized, the two who might best have held things together had removed. Lismanino, having fallen into disfavor with the king, had gone to Prussia where, after a brief stay at the court of Duke Albert of Königsberg, he had died in 1563; while in the same year Biandrata, as we have seen, had gone to Transylvania; and no one in those troublous times had arise to take their places.

The Minor Church, in fact, seems at this time to have been most loosely organized. Such synods as its members held had only local influence, and no strong authority, and there was no generally accepted standard of belief. Almost the sole point on which they were united was the one which had caused their separation from the orthodox: as to the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Father was supreme over the Son. As soon as ever they tried to state their views on other doctrines they fell out with one another. On three other heads in particular there were wide differences and endless controversies among them: as to the right form of administering baptism and Lord's Supper, as to their belief about Christ and the Holy Spirit, and as to their attitude toward the civil government and their practical conduct of life. These differences had arisen in Poland even before Antitrinitarianism, and dated back to the very beginnings of the Reformation.

The first of these questions to trouble the Minor Church seriously was the question of baptism. To us this may seem a comparatively trivial matter, but to them it was of the most vital concern; for had not Jesus said, "He that believ-

eth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned"? To continue the Catholic practice of infant baptism, then, when it had not been commanded or even practiced in the New Testament, or to rely upon it as baptism at all, seemed to them, as it had to the earlier Anabaptists, to be risking their hope of eternal salvation. Gonesius had therefore attacked infant baptism when he first appeared in Lithuania, and a minister named Czechowicz had led his followers there in the same direction. A lively controversy ensued, which was protracted through six years. Soon after the organization of the Minor Church in 1565, at the synod of Wengrow, with delegates in attendance from all parts of the kingdom, it was prayerfully and earnestly debated for six days whether the practice of infant baptism was commanded by Scripture. It was concluded that the practice should be given up, though some liberty in the matter was left to individual consciences.

The next question to be settled was yet more important, and it divided the Minor Church yet more deeply. It was the question as to what view they should hold as to the person of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. It soon came to be accepted without serious debate that the Holy Spirit was not to be worshiped as God, but the question as to Christ caused divisions which almost split the Church. At the synod of Lancut (1567) which was called in order, if possible, to bring about harmony on this matter, the debate between the Arians and those who held that Christ did not exist before his birth upon earth, was so angry (the nobles were said with one exception to have been more moderate than the ministers) that the judges adjourned the discussion to a synod at Skrzynno later in the same year, and prepared for a more formal and orderly discussion by choosing the speakers and laying down rules for the conduct of the debate. A

hundred and ten nobles and ministers came together from all parts of Poland and Lithuania, besides a great crowd from the vicinity, all eager to hear the discussion. No fixed agreement was reached as to the doctrines under discussion, but it was resolved that the Trinity should be reverently and sacredly retained with this condition, that the brethren should bear with one another in brotherly love and refrain from abusing one another in controversy; that each one should follow his own conscience as to baptism and the Lord's Supper; and that they should claim no authority over one another in matters of faith, leaving it to God in his own time (as Christ had taught) to separate the tares from the wheat. This action was for its time a remarkable step in the direction of religious tolerance, nor has it been surpassed to this day. It did not, however, succeed at once in healing the divisions over the belief about Christ; for at the time of which we are speaking, the antitrinitarian movement in Poland was divided over this doctrine into four more or less distinct parties, which flourished mostly in separate localities.

The first party was led by a minister named Farnowski (Farnovius), and hence they were called Farnovians. Like Gonesius they held the Arian view that Christ had existed before the creation of the world, and should be worshiped as God, though they did not think it right to worship the Holy Spirit. They declared that even the religion of the Mohammedans or the Jews was better than that of Athanasius. They also opposed infant baptism. Farnowski held so stoutly for these views that about 1568 his followers, having won the patronage of some distinguished nobles toward the edge of Hungary, separated from the rest and established their own churches and schools. They held aloof

for nearly fifty years, but after the death of their leader they either rejoined the other Antitrinitarians or else returned to the Calvinists.

Another party was led by Czechowicz, a minister in Lithuania, where he had great influence. After having been for some time an Arian, he adopted much more radical views, holding that Christ was a man born like other men, but that he was sinless and was made God (so Servetus had taught), and hence should be worshiped; while those who would not worship Christ he called semi-judaizers. He opposed infant baptism, and also held with the Anabaptists that Christians ought to practice non-resistance, and neither to bear arms nor to hold civil office; but at his death he urged his followers not to separate from the Minor Church.

Yet a third party, about Krakow, followed the lead of that Gregory Paulus whom we have already met. He too denied that Christ had existed before the creation of the world, and also denied that he should be worshiped. He likewise opposed infant baptism, denied the authority of earthly powers, held that Christians should neither bear arms nor hold public office, advocated community of goods after the manner of the primitive Church, and expected Christ soon to appear again to set up the millennium.

Finally there was a party called Budnæans after their leader, Simon Budny of Lithuania. He was a man of extraordinary learning, who in 1572 had published a translation of the Bible into Polish which was highly esteemed, and two years later a separate one of the New Testament. Of these four leaders he came nearest to the views of modern Unitarians, for he declared that Christ was naturally born like other men, and that to worship him was idolatry; but though he too had numerous followers in Lithuania, yet

this teaching of his seemed to the churches at large so impious that he was excommunicated, as were some others who held similar views.

Besides these questions of theological belief, the Minor Church during its earlier years was also much distracted by another group of questions relating to the practical conduct of the members as followers of Christ. Many of these believers were conscientiously in earnest about trying to live in this world precisely as Christ had commanded, and to make his law of love the rule which should actually regulate all their actions. They took his teachings literally, and did not try to explain them away when they seemed inconvenient or impracticable, but meant to follow them to the letter; and they took his example and that of his apostles and the early Church as a model for their imitation. Therefore they did not believe in offering resistance to those who did them evil, but bore their wrongs and persecutions with Christian patience; they did not believe in bearing arms, for that was the first step toward going to war and breaking the commandment not to kill; they would not accept civil office, and some of them resigned important offices under the government, for all government rested upon force in place of Christ's law of love; they would not take oaths, since Christ had commanded, "Swear not at all"; they believed in sharing their property in common with one another, for this had been the practice in the earliest Church at Jerusalem. These were of course principles long before adopted by the first Anabaptists, and coming by way of Moravia they had spread more or less widely in Poland. We have already seen that Gonesius, Czechowicz, and Paulus held such views as these, and they were especially rife in the vicinity of Krakow. These views were by no means universally adopted by the Antitrinitarians. Some adopted

them wholly, some rejected them wholly, and doubtless the majority adopted a part and ignored the rest. A local congregation, with Paulus for its minister, was founded at Krakow in 1569 on these principles, and from that time on they were repeatedly discussed in synods at the new center of Rakow.

The significant thing about the unfortunate divisions of which we have spoken is the fact that when the members of the new movement found themselves left all at sea after having forsaken the old orthodox Creeds, they were so pathetically in earnest to draw out of Scripture its true doctrines, and to conduct their daily lives strictly according to the teachings of Jesus, let it cost them or their churches what it might in the way of persecution by the orthodox, or of separation from their brethren. At any cost they would remain true to their consciences. These divisions threatened for a time, however, to prove fatal to the movement altogether; and for several years the young church was occupied in trying either to find some common ground of belief, or if that could not be, then in finding some way of getting on together peaceably in spite of different beliefs.

A little catechism published in 1574 in the name of the Anabaptist congregation at Krakow, though probably composed by Schomann, Paulus's colleague in the ministry there, is of great interest for being the first such work to be printed in the history of the movement we are tracing. It is supported throughout by texts of Scripture, and teaches that Christ was a man who brought eternal life to the world, and that he is to be adored and prayed to as our mediator with God, and to be followed as an example. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but a power of God [1] bestowed upon Christ and men. The taking of oaths, and the resistance

[1] So Servetus, page 62.

to injuries, are forbidden. Baptism is to be by immersion, and to be administered only to adults. These Anabaptists in Poland, as elsewhere, tended to run into extravagances, and sometimes bordered on the fanatical; but on the whole they formed the vital heart and soul of the new church, and their influence is to be traced throughout its whole history. The strictness of their morals, the gentleness of their lives, and their consistent obedience to conscience, never failed to win the praise of even those who were most opposed to their doctrines.

When the members and congregations of the Minor Church were so divided in opinion during its infancy, and were so much opposed to one another just because they were divided in opinion, it must have had the less strength left either to extend itself or to repel attacks from without; and there was a far greater danger than perhaps was realized that the Church might therefore fall quite to pieces, and come to an end in less than a generation. Another danger, however, which the members did keenly realize and acutely fear, came from the relentless and bitter attacks of their enemies. For not content with what they had already accomplished by excluding the antitrinitarian party from the Reformed Church, the orthodox at once laid further plans for overthrowing them altogether. Uniting with the Catholics at the Diet of Lublin in 1566, they put pressure upon the king to issue an edict against Anabaptists and Tritheists (as they called the Antitrinitarians), requiring them to leave the realm within a month, and they spared no pains to get it strictly enforced. They struck first at Filipowski who, as Treasurer of the Palatinate of Krakow, was perhaps the most influential of all the Antitrinitarians, and he barely escaped with his life. The rest, remembering the fate of Servetus, Gentile, and others, scattered like sheep before wolves, some

going into the country, others seeking shelter with nobles powerful enough to protect them. After a time, through the influence of one of his highest officials, who was himself an Antitrinitarian, the king was persuaded to grant them indulgence during his lifetime, and so the storm blew over.

Nothing daunted by his recent experiences, Filipowski still attempted to make peace with the enemy. To this end he went with some of the brethren to attend a great synod held at Krakow in 1568 by the Lutherans and Calvinists, who proposed to unite against Catholic oppression on the one hand, and Anabaptist heresies on the other. He powerfully urged there that all parties use mutual tolerance as to doctrines on which they differed, and consent to live together in Christian love. The orthodox would not yield an inch; one notable convert was gained there, however, in the person of Andrew Dudicz. He was a Hungarian noble who, for his talents, learning, and the distinguished part he played in public affairs, was one of the most celebrated men of his age. He had been councillor to three emperors, and bishop of three sees in succession, had been one of the most prominent delegates to the Council of Trent, and had been sent on various important embassies. Having become Protestant, he had joined the Reformed Church at Krakow; but when he observed with what bitterness its leaders spoke of their opponents, and how they rejected the peaceable advances made by Filipowski, he left them for the Minor Church, whose doctrines also approved themselves to him as more reasonable, and became patron of its congregation at Schmiegel in the province of Great Poland, where he built them a church and school, which he supported till his death.

Though again rebuffed, the Antitrinitarians still hungered for religious fellowship which they might enjoy while yet preserving full liberty of belief. They were not a little

cheered therefore when they heard the next year (1569), through the reports of a traveler, that the Anabaptists of Moravia, among whom we have already found our exiles from Italy and Switzerland hospitably received,[1] agreed with them in all respects except as to the holding of public office, which was against the Anabaptist principles; and since much was related of their singular piety, charity, and purity of morals, Filipowski, with several of the brethren, now undertook a mission to the Moravians, hoping to bring about some form of union with them. Here again they were doomed to disappointment; for although the Moravian brethren were found to be otherwise all that had been told of them, they were such ardent defenders of the received doctrine of the Trinity that they did not scruple to call their visitors heathen for denying it. The brethren therefore returned in deep discouragement, and most of the ministers of Little Poland gave up preaching.

A turn in their affairs for the better, however, was unexpectedly to come from another quarter, through the death of the king. Sigismund Augustus, though nominally a Catholic, was at heart much inclined toward the Reformation, having twenty years before been influenced in that direction by Lismanino;[2] and there were indications that he inwardly favored the antitrinitarian party in the Reformed Church. He had taken so much interest in the discussions of the doctrine of the Trinity that he got his secretary, Modrzewski, to draw up an account of the differences between the two parties, with the arguments on both sides, hoping to find some way to bring the two factions together. The manuscript of this book (the famous *Sylvæ*) accidentally fell into the hands of one of the orthodox party, who

[1] See pages 68, 104, 108, 113, 114, 115.

[2] See page 126.

found it so favorable to the Antitrinitarians that he carried it away, and would not return it, lest it get into print and make converts; and it was therefore not published until twenty-five years later. Had the king lived, the Minor Church might have had much to hope from him; but he died in 1572, and his dynasty thus became extinct. The nobles took advantage of this occasion to make sure of securing their full rights under any future rulers. They drew up a new law, making it a condition of the election of any new king, that he should take his oath to preserve peace among the religious sects, and they sacredly pledged themselves and their posterity, that, though differing from one another as to religion (*dissidentes*[1] *de religione*), they would keep the peace with one another, would not shed one another's blood, nor punish one another in any way, nor assist a magistrate in doing so, and would with all their might oppose any one who on any pretext should attempt such a thing. There were numerous representatives of the Minor Church in the Diet which passed this compact (the celebrated *pax Dissidentium*, 1573), and they became parties to it along with the rest; and although its provisions were later violated, and were eventually ignored altogether, nevertheless it became a fundamental law of the land, and secured the Minor Church an existence of nearly a century.

Despite the persecutions they had suffered and the dangers they had run, the number of adherents of the Minor Church continued large; and under the protection of the new law it now increased rapidly, especially among the educated nobility; for they, not having been so strictly trained up in the subtleties of theology as the clergy had been, felt the less devoted to the teachings of the creeds; while, like all Protestants of that period, they were keenly interested in the

1 Hence the term, Dissidents, later applied only to non-Catholics.

study of the Scriptures, and as they read those they could not but see that they contained little enough to support the peculiar doctrine of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds. The Diet of the kingdom was said to be filled with "Arians," and their beliefs found wide acceptance among all classes except the ignorant peasantry who, being little better than serfs, were little regarded by any of the Protestant churches. Within a generation churches were established in every part of the kingdom, from Danzig to Kijow (Kief), and from northern Lithuania to the Carpathians; but most numerously in Little Poland and Lithuania, while in Great Poland they were few and widely scattered.

No mean factor in the growth of the Minor Church was the city of Rakow, founded in 1569 by a powerful magnate named Sieninski. Though a Calvinist, he offered the residents of his new town, among other advantages, that of perfect freedom of religious worship. Many of the Antitrinitarians therefore, being apprehensive of persecution where they were, came from all parts of the kingdom and settled here; among them Gregory Paulus who, having been driven from Krakow, founded a church at Rakow which eventually became the leading one in all Poland. The new congregation grew rapidly, and its preachers were men of the greatest reputation. The Anabaptists regarded Rakow as almost a new Jerusalem, and it came to be looked on as an especial object of divine providence. For a time rather extreme Anabaptist views were rife here, and in the church school all scholars were required to learn some manual trade. Numerous synods were held at Rakow, and it became for sixty years or more the center and source of all the main influences in the Minor Church. The more important part of its history, however, belongs in a later chapter.

We have now reached a point in our history where this

church seemed in a way to become fairly established. While disputes on the points we have mentioned were still rife among its members well on into the seventeenth century, yet they had now ceased to be a source of serious danger to the church's existence; for however much in earnest the members might be over their doctrines, the principle of mutual tolerance and charity was firmly established and generally accepted among them. Although still hated as before by both Catholics and Protestants, they now stood under the equal protection of the law which was in the interest of all the churches alike, and the age of civil persecution seemed past. One thing was still needful, if they were to have a vigorous life and a wide growth under these favorable conditions; and that was a leader who could do for them what Luther and Calvin had done for their churches: organize their system of thought, lead them in counsel, and direct them in action. Such a leader soon appeared in the person of Faustus Socinus.

CHAPTER XVII

FAUSTUS SOCINUS AND THE FULL DEVELOPMENT OF SOCINIANISM IN POLAND, 1579–1638

At the time when, as we saw in the last chapter, the Polish Antitrinitarians most needed leadership, the needed leader appeared in the person of Faustus Socinus (in Italian, Fausto Sozzini). He organized their beliefs into a consistent system purged of extravagances and extreme positions; he ably represented them in their controversies with their opponents both Catholic and Protestant; and although a foreigner he so won their confidence and love, and so stamped himself upon their movement, that it eventually came to be known after him as Socinianism, by which name, for the sake of convenience, we shall henceforth refer to it.[1] Socinus was born at Siena, Italy, in 1539, and was nephew of Lælius Socinus, whom we found as one of the Antitrin-

[1] The Socinians themselves did not use this name, or at least not until long afterwards. Their official name, as we have seen, was the Minor Reformed Church of Poland. They liked best to call themselves merely Christians, or Catholic Christians, or Polish Brethren. The name of Unitarians, borne by those of like faith in Transylvania, later became attached to them, and at length they were glad to accept it. To the end they never ceased to protest against the name of Arians, or of Anabaptists, by which their enemies insisted on calling them; for the former of these names stood for views which we have seen that they rejected early in their history, and the latter was more or less associated with fanatical social and religious views with which many of them had little sympathy.

itarians at Zürich in the time of Calvin.[1] When he was but two years old his father died, leaving him to be brought up without regular education, as he never ceased to regret; and the law, in which many of his family had distinguished themselves, never attracted him. Soon after he became of age, the Sozzini family fell under suspicion of being Protestant heretics. One of them was seized by the Inquisition, and the rest fled, among them Faustus, who for some two years lived mostly at Lyon, though he was at Geneva long enough to become a member of the Italian church there. While he was at Lyon, his uncle Lælius died, leaving him his manuscripts, most of them on religious subjects. These may well have planted in his mind seeds that were to ripen later, but for a time they seem to have made no impression upon him; for he returned to Italy the next year, and from 1563 to 1575 lived the life of a courtier at Florence, in the service of Isabella de' Medici, daughter of the Grand-Duke Cosimo of Tuscany, remaining outwardly a good Catholic. During this period he published a book *On the Authority of Holy Scripture* which was highly esteemed by both Catholics and Protestants, was translated into several languages, and continued in circulation for over a century and a half.

Upon the death of his patroness Socinus refused all inducements to remain longer at court, left Italy never to return, and went to Basel which was then a place of considerable religious freedom, and for three years applied himself to the study of religious subjects, chiefly the Bible. While there he wrote a treatise showing much independence of thought, *On Christ the Savior*, in which he defended the view that Christ is our Savior not because he suffered for our sins, but because he showed us the way to eternal salvation, which

[1] See page 114.

consists in our imitating him; and that he did not suffer to satisfy God's justice nor to appease his wrath. This view was in sharp contrast to that then generally held, and although the book was at first circulated only in manuscript, and was not published until years later in Poland, it at once established his reputation as an able and independent theologian. The result was that he was soon urged to come to Transylvania to assist in a discussion then going on there over the question whether Christians should worship Christ. The account of that discussion will be found in a later chapter: when it was done Socinus proceeded to Poland, where he arrived early in 1579. Here he was to spend twenty-five fruitful years in promoting the religious movement whose history we are following. He was now forty years old.

Coming to the capital at Krakow, Socinus found in the Anabaptist congregation there a company of Christians with whom he so much sympathized that the following year, at a synod at Rakow, he applied for admission to their membership. Now while he had been baptized in infancy, the new church insisted that before joining it he must receive adult baptism. This he declined to have done, for he thought that it would be an admission that baptism was necessary to a Christian, which he did not at all believe, though he did not object to the practice for any that wished it for themselves. He was also found to disagree with them on several other important doctrines. The church therefore rejected his application for membership and refused to admit him to the Lord's Supper. He took no offense, however, but continued to worship with them, attend their synods, defend them against their opponents in controversy, and take part in their doctrinal discussions. It was in these last that he did the most valuable service to the cause by bringing about harmony of opinion. For he had a profound acquaintance

with the Bible, to which appeal was always made on these occasions, and was an accomplished debater; and best of all he invariably kept his temper in controversy and never abused his opponents (as was then generally done, even in religious debate), but instead preserved the manners of a courtier, and relied upon the calm appeal to reason.

His influence with the churches was not a little increased when, having been forced by threats of prosecution to leave Krakow, and having accepted the hospitality of a nobleman in the vicinity, he presently married his host's only daughter, and thus became connected with many persons of great influence. At two synods in 1584 he argued powerfully against the belief of many who expected Christ soon to appear again upon earth, and also in favor of the worship of Christ, without which, he maintained, we should be no better than Jews or even atheists. At the request of the churches he replied to attacks that had been made upon their doctrine of the unity of God by professors in the Jesuit college at Posen. He confuted the Arians; and the number of those who came to agree with him steadily increased, especially among the younger men. At length, at the synod of Brest in Lithuania in 1588, where he discussed the main points of doctrine, it was clear that he had won over all but a very few of the most obstinate, and henceforth he was the acknowledged leader of the thought of the Minor Church.

From this time on for fifty years Socinianism had a brilliant career in Poland. Rakow was its capital and the center of its influence. Its Calvinistic proprietor became interested in Socinianism and instituted a public discussion of doctrines between Calvinists and Socinians, and as a result of this he joined the latter in 1600. Two years later he established a school there. Its teachers were able scholars with reputation throughout Europe. It grew rapidly and

became famous. Young men were sent to it from both Catholic and Protestant sources until it had about a thousand students, nearly a third of them from the nobility. Rakow became known as "the Sarmatian Athens." So many came here even from Germany that special services in the German language were held for them. In this school young men were trained up for the Socinian ministry under teachers whose fame survives among scholars to this day. A fine press was also removed from Krakow and set up here, and on it were printed large numbers of works by Socinian writers, whose faith was thus spread in print over all Europe. General synods for all Poland were held here every year, and ministers and nobles from all parts of the kingdom came to attend them.

There were also churches in almost all the other important cities, and every large church had a school by its side, conducted by one of the younger clergy.

Although Socinianism was the least numerous of the three forms of Protestantism in Poland, none had a more distinguished company of adherents. We have already noted to what extent it had spread among the nobility. One of their apologists writing later in an age of persecution fills six pages with a list of early Antitrinitarians and later Socinians who had held public offices of the highest distinction in the kingdom, and there were said to be none of the greatest families in Poland or Lithuania, even those of dukes and princes, but were related to some of the Socinians. It is even true that for a short time one who had been brought up in the Socinian faith sat upon the throne of Russia (1605–1606), the so-called False Demetrius, pretended son of the late Czar. A Catholic historian of Polish literature bears witness that the Socinians were intellectually the most advanced, cultivated, and talented of all the Polish dissidents,

and that they left an enduring impression on the history of Polish literature.

The official records of the Minor Church, though long jealously guarded, have now long since vanished from sight, so that it is impossible to say just how widely the Church extended. But we know of a synod at Rakow in 1612 which was attended by 400 delegates, and of another in 1618 by 459, and the names of 115 churches are still on record; so that it would probably not be unfair to estimate that first and last there were as many as 300 Socinian congregations,[1] though many of these were prematurely crushed out by persecution, or were lost through a change of patron. Their form of government was practically the same as that of the Reformed Church. The churches were organized into synods composed of ministers and lay delegates. There was probably one of these for each palatinate or county, perhaps one for each province, and over them all a general synod for the whole kingdom which met at Rakow for a week or two each year.

Each synod elected a superintendent for its own district, who appointed ministers and teachers for the local churches, assigned them their locations or removed them, and also visited the churches each year. He was assisted by elders, both lay and clerical. Annual synods were held in each palatinate and local synods more frequently if occasion required. At these everything was attended to that concerned the welfare and growth of the church. Ministers were ordained and teachers named for the home churches, and missionaries appointed to spread the faith in other countries; salaries for ministers and teachers were voted out of a common fund raised by apportionment among the churches; aid was voted for promising young men to study for the ministry at Ra-

[1] In that case, not so very many less than the Reformed.

kow or at foreign universities; grants were made to be distributed by the deacons to widows and orphans or others in need; pensions were granted to retired ministers and teachers; aid was sent to needy brethren living abroad or banished on account of their faith; differences which had arisen between the members, if they could not be privately settled, were adjusted here, for the Socinians, following the teaching of Jesus, never resorted to the law courts except as a last resort; breaches of morality received earnest attention; and the editing and publishing of books which might spread the faith were provided for. Any matters which could not be settled in the local synods were carried up to the general synod.

It was from these synods, also, that those proposals for union with other churches proceeded, which were repeatedly made by the Socinians, and as often rejected by the orthodox. Socinus had never desired to be the founder of a new sect, and he never claimed to be anything more than merely a Christian; and one of his most interesting writings is an address in which he endeavored to persuade the members of the rapidly dwindling Reformed Church of their duty as Christians to join in one free national church with "those who are falsely and unjustly called Arians and Ebionites." We have already noticed an early attempt to unite with the Moravian Anabaptists. A similar move for union with the Reformed Church was made in 1580, when representatives of the Minor Church went to a Reformed synod at Lewartow hoping for a conference on the subject; but the Reformed refused to have anything to do with them, "since they were followers of Ebion, Arius, and Paul of Samosata, who had long ago been excommunicated from the Church." Another attempt at union was made at Rakow in

1598, but the conference which took place came to nothing, whereupon Socinus issued the address above referred to.

A few years later, when it was becoming evident that Catholics, instigated by the Jesuits, were beginning a systematic policy of attack upon all Protestants, efforts were for the third time renewed for union with the Reformed. From 1611 on several conferences with the Reformed were held, which for a time gave promise of success, on a basis of mutual tolerance of differences of belief. But the Jesuits had poisoned the minds of the Reformed against the Socinians as enemies of all Christendom, and the Reformed refused to consider any union unless the Socinians would agree to their doctrines as to the Trinity, the atonement, and baptism; while one of their theologians published a book to show that the two could no more unite than fire and water. Nor did an attempt in 1619 at a purely political alliance between them against the Catholics succeed any better. Not until too late did the Reformed discover that only by all standing together could the Protestants of Poland have prevented the destruction which at length overwhelmed them all.

Prospects for union with the Mennonites of Holland might have seemed brighter, for these were descended from the Anabaptists of earlier times,[1] and had many points in common with the Socinians; yet the latter's proposal in 1612 was declined as impracticable. Twenty years later the Remonstrants of Holland, also, who had lately protested against the doctrines of Calvin, and were then suffering bitter persecution and exile in consequence, gave ground for yet brighter hopes of union; but when this was proposed to them in 1632 it was nevertheless refused—perhaps be-

[1] See page 46.

cause the Remonstrants had already been accused by their enemies of being Socinians in disguise, and were unwilling to do anything which could be taken for an admission of the charge. Thus the Socinians were on every hand persistently shut off from all religious fellowship; and even as late as 1645, when a friendly conference of all religious persuasions was called together at Thorn (the *Colloquium Charitativum*), and when danger from the Catholic quarter was more threatening than ever, they were still refused admission to it among the other Protestants.

The Socinians showed the depth and sincerity of their devotion to their faith not only by suffering ostracism and persecution for it, but also by their zealous and persistent efforts to spread it among others both at home and abroad. To the very end of their existence in Poland they were active and wonderfully zealous propagandists. Their favorite missionary method at home was through public debates, if these could be arranged with their opponents; and they had such confidence in their cause that though others might shrink from debate, they themselves never did. They preferred to have these debates conducted like the discussions of learned men, under prescribed rules and forms, with theses and antitheses, objections and refutations, made by the debaters in due order, and preferably submitted in writing. These would then be printed for people to read and digest at leisure. Thus they depended far more on reason and argument than on mere eloquence or passion. The most famous of all these discussions was one with the Jesuits. It was carried on entirely by the pen, lasted from 1603 to 1618, and was comprised in more than twenty printed books. In these discussions the attitude of the Socinians was never timid or apologetic, but habitually bold and aggressive; yet their imitation of the habit of Socinus

in carrying on their discussions with good temper and in mild speech set a new and good example, and won praise even from their opponents. They are said also to have won many converts through the fine spirit that prevailed in their discussions among themselves at their synods. Their use of the printing press has already been spoken of, and it made Socinianism well known and its influence greatly feared all over Europe. The number of religious books they published was astonishing,[1] and a great flood of writings came forth in answer to them, from Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists.

The Socinians also made liberal appropriations for sending missionaries into the other countries of Europe. It was only in rare cases that these dared venture upon public preaching, for freedom of worship did not yet exist anywhere west of Poland; and more than once these missionaries were arrested, imprisoned, or banished for trying to propagate their faith, and were released only on condition of ceasing to do so in future. Their most successful method, therefore, was to send abroad their most polished and cultivated scholars, who would form influential acquaintances, converse with them on religious subjects, put Socinian books into their hands, and thus influence the opinions of the leaders of thought. In this way a far-reaching influence was early exerted in Holland; and such missionaries went also to Germany, France, and England. Of course, with laws against heresy being as they were, such a thing as establishing Socinian churches abroad was entirely out of the question.

The most effective of these silent missionaries were the young men who went to the western universities to continue the education they had begun at Rakow in preparation for

[1] A very incomplete list shows some 500 separate works or editions.

the ministry. They thus made secret converts among the students at Leiden, Strassburg, Heidelberg, and most of all at Altorf,[1] which for a few years early in the seventeenth century was a veritable hot-bed for propagating Socinians. The Rector of this school, Dr. Soner, had been converted to Socinianism by some Polish students at Leiden when he was studying there, and he kept up a correspondence with the brethren in Poland. Socinian students from there flocked to his lectures, and with his encouragement made many converts among the Germans and others studying there. These young Socinians formed a secret society among themselves, and after the manner of the learned academies of the time they gave themselves fictitious Latin names, and thus the better kept their secret. In 1616 however their secret was discovered by the authorities, and they were arrested and for a time imprisoned; after which a few recanted, though most were expelled and returned to Poland. One result of this foreign propaganda was that not a few of the most eminent Socinian ministers and scholars in Poland and Transylvania were men of foreign birth and education who had been converted by these means, and had then been obliged to remove thither to enjoy their faith in peace.

Long before Socinianism had reached the widespread influence which we have described, Socinus himself had died. His young wife had early been taken from him, leaving him only an infant daughter; his estate in Italy had been confiscated, and now, broken in fortune, health, and spirit, he retired to the home of a friendly noble at Luclawice in the foothills of the Carpathians, where he died in 1604, aged sixty-

[1] Here stood a famous gymnasium which in 1623 became a university. In 1809 it united with that at Erlangen.

five. Legend says that his grave was later opened and his ashes scattered by fanatics, but the place of his burial is known, and a battered monument still remains to mark the spot.[1] During these last years he was surrounded by sympathetic friends, most prized among them being Stoinski, the eloquent and scholarly young minister of the place. Socinus occupied his time in writing books, and in making visits far and wide among the churches. His last occupation was in trying to make a systematic statement of Christian doctrine for the use of the churches. Together with Stoinski, he had been requested to revise the Catechism of 1574 then in use, and he left behind him unfinished a brief system of instruction in the Christian religion in the form of a Catechism (*Christianæ Religionis brevissima Institutio*), as well as the fragment of another Catechism.

Stoinski died the year after Socinus, but their unfinished work was continued and completed after their death by Schmalz, Moskorzowski, and Völkel, and was published in Polish in 1605 at Rakow (Latin, *Racovia*), whence it came to be known as the Racovian Catechism. This little book, which passed through six editions in Latin, one in German, two in Dutch, and two in English (not to mention the children's Catechism based upon it and published in Polish, Latin, and German), was in print for more than two centuries, was very widely circulated throughout Europe, and was answered or attacked numberless times by orthodox theologians, who seemed to suffer acute fear lest its teachings should spread in their churches. Beyond doubt it did more than any other book ever published (except the New

[1] It has in recent years been proposed to raise a fund and erect a suitable memorial on the spot, but the scheme was interrupted by the war in Europe.

Testament itself) to spread Unitarian ways of thinking about religion. Its teaching therefore deserves special attention.

The key-note to the whole system of Socinian doctrine seems to lie in the text: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent"; and the Christian religion is defined at the outset as a *way* of attaining this eternal life, divinely revealed in the Scriptures (especially the New Testament), which certain proofs show to be true, which are easy to understand, and which contain all things necessary for salvation. Throughout the book, therefore, the proof of its teaching is drawn from the Bible, and only in a few instances are orthodox doctrines opposed on the ground that they are unreasonable.

Man is by nature mortal, and the only way for him to gain eternal life is by *knowledge* of God and Christ. It is of the utmost importance, then, that this knowledge be correct, else our hopes of eternal life would be imperiled. We must therefore know that God is only one in person, for belief in the Trinity may easily destroy the faith in one God; and we must also know that Christ is by nature a true man, though not a mere man, for he was miraculously born. On these two main heads there are long arguments against the orthodox view.

We must also acknowledge Christ as God, being one who has divine power over us, and one to whom we are bound to show divine honor in adoration, and whose aid we can ask in any need; adoring him for his sublime majesty, and seeking aid of his divine power. Those who do not do this are not Christians. Jesus was sinless, and wrought miracles. He rose from the dead, thus assuring us that we shall rise also; his resurrection is therefore much more important than his

death, though by dying for us sinful men he showed us the way to return to God and be reconciled to him.

The Holy Spirit is not a person in the godhead, but a *power* of God bestowed on men from on high.

There is no such thing as original sin, or predestination; and men are justified in the sight of God only through their faith in Christ, who now lives in heaven, making continual intercession for us, whence he will come to judge the living and the dead.

There is only one sacrament, the Lord's Supper, which is a memorial rite. Baptism is only an outward rite by which converts to Christianity publicly acknowledge their faith in Christ. Infant baptism is unscriptural, though those that practice it without trying to force it on others should not be condemned or persecuted. The Church is a company of Christians who hold and profess sound doctrine.

These teachings, which are all given in the ordinary catechism form of question and answer, are those that would seem most striking to a modern reader of the first edition of the Racovian Catechism. Later editions greatly enlarged and somewhat changed this first edition; but these teachings remained substantially as given. It may be noted that the Catechism is in close harmony with the Apostles' Creed, so far as that goes; and indeed Socinians were always wont to appeal to that as against the later creeds. It is noteworthy also that, except for the subject of baptism, little is found of the peculiar teachings of the Anabaptists or the Arians, though in limited localities or under individual ministers Socinians still adhered to these. If the Catechism is far from being orthodox, it is also far from modern Unitarianism. Yet the root of the matter was there; for in its freedom from the authority of the creeds, in its free and scholarly way of explaining scripture, in its appeal to

reason and its emphasis on right conduct (both of these much more emphasized in the later editions), and in its tolerance of different opinions, it came close to the fundamental principles of the Unitarianism of the twentieth century.

The true character and worth of a religion, however, can not be learned from its catechism or its creeds, any more than the character and worth of a man from his skeleton. If we would truly know what Socinianism was, we must consider not only its theory but its practice. We should need to attend its services of religious worship, hear its sermons, hymns, and prayers, observe the earnestness and devotion of the people to their religion, and above all note what effect it had upon their daily life, and what kind of characters it produced. Unfortunately we can not do that, for as we shall soon see, Socinianism in Poland came after a century to a tragic end. Yet fortunately there have been preserved to us some detailed accounts of their church customs, and many comments upon their characters. We know, therefore, that the Socinians, both in Poland and in exile, were a very sincerely devout people. They observed Sunday very strictly, holding two or three services on Sundays and holy days, to which the members often came from long distances; and there was also preaching on Wednesdays and Fridays, and frequent days of fasting and prayer were observed. Every nobleman's house had its chapel, and domestic worship with scripture and prayer was held twice daily. They held the Lord's Supper very sacred, and counted it a great deprivation to be kept away from it; and they emphasized the importance of private devotional life. When members of their church therefore were scattered or distant from church privileges, great pains were taken to send them ministers from time to time to preach and administer the Lord's Supper.

Their moral standards also were very strict and strictly observed; and it was a regular part of their church discipline to watch carefully over one another's characters and admonish one another like brothers and sisters. If a member did wrong and did not show repentance for it, the matter was dealt with in the church meeting; and if he persisted he was forbidden to come to the Lord's Supper. Though they did not adopt the Anabaptist doctrines into their Catechism, many of them followed the Anabaptist traditions in the conduct of their lives. Indeed they strove to make their churches as nearly as possible like the first Christian churches, and they tried literally to follow the teachings of Jesus. They looked watchfully after the wants of their poor, the widows, and the orphans. They would not fight, nor go to law, nor avenge injuries, nor hold serfs; they were peaceable, patient, gentle, forgiving, unostentatious, and they lived exemplary lives. In many respects they resembled the Quakers, though their more extreme views and practices were not adhered to always and by all their members, and tended to become modified in the course of time; yet a clear Anabaptist strain always persisted, and to the very end some refused to bear arms or to hold civil office. This is the general testimony of both their friends and their foes. We have already seen how eager they were to spread among others the faith which they held; and we shall see in the next chapter how ready they were to suffer the loss of everything rather than forsake it. In fact, a recent Catholic historian says that Polish "Arianism" was the most interesting page in Polish religious history, and that no other confession in Poland can count so high a percentage of authors in the seventeenth century; and that one reason why their numbers did not become larger was that their demands were too strict.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF SOCINIANISM, AND ITS BANISHMENT FROM POLAND, 1638–1660

The last chapter told the happy story of how Socinianism, in spite of many obstacles, overcame them all and rose to a position of widespread influence in Poland. All the while it was gaining strength, however, clouds were gathering below the horizon which were eventually to break into a storm which should overwhelm in ruin not only Socinianism but at length all of Polish Protestantism. We must now go back to trace this other story from its beginning.

The rise of Protestantism in Poland reached its height with the Union of Sandomir [1] (*Consensus Sandomiriensis*) in 1570, and the power of the Catholics in the affairs of the nation was then at a low ebb, with only a minority in either house of the Diet. Shortly after this the orthodox Protestants proposed to put all "Arians" under the ban; but to this the Catholics would not consent, since it would seem to imply an increased recognition of the other Protestants. This Union was repeatedly confirmed among the orthodox Protestant bodies for twenty-five years, though the Minor Church was persistently excluded from it. Further than this however, orthodox opposition no longer attempted to go. The trouble was instead to come from the Catholic side, and it was initiated under Cardinal Hosius, a man of

[1] See page 134.

great learning and of the most admirable personal character, but an extreme Catholic whose convictions led him to subordinate every other interest to the welfare of the church, and to urge that it would be to the detriment of the church for the government to keep any promise it might have made to protect the Protestant heretics in their rights, when they deserved to be utterly exterminated.

The order of Jesuits now comes into the story. It had been founded in 1539, and had ere long come to devote itself especially to overthrowing Protestantism; and in 1564 Cardinal Hosius invited Jesuits to come to Poland for this purpose. They came in large numbers from Spain and Germany and began opening schools all over the land, some fifty of them in all, and amply endowed. All that the Protestant nobles seemed to realize of what was going on was that here were better schools than they had known before, taught by talented scholars and polished gentlemen, many of them of noble birth; and they therefore soon began sending their sons to these new schools for their education. What the Jesuits intended was that these young Polish nobles, after having been kept for some years under their instruction, should many of them be won over to the Catholic faith, so that in a generation or two (and they were always willing to work on long lines) most of the ruling classes of Poland would again be back in the fold of the church. So it turned out, for within two generations they had all Poland securely in their net, and were prepared to draw it whenever they found the time ripe. Their policy was to win the confidence and favor of the upper classes without at first revealing their purpose, then to push against the Protestants in general whenever a favorable opportunity presented itself, and finally to divide the Protestants against one another. This last purpose was all too easily accomplished, for the

orthodox were ready enough to attack the "Arians," and were glad repeatedly to join with the Catholics against those heretical Protestants as enemies of all Christendom. It was not until too late, when they had themselves fallen victims to this policy, that it dawned upon them that they had been used as tools to help carry out the far-sighted Jesuit plan for overthrowing all Polish Protestantism.

The tolerant King Sigismund Augustus II died in 1572, as we have seen, and Henry of Valois who succeeded him wore his Polish crown but a few months before going to receive a more shining one in France as Henry III. The election to the throne next fell (1574) to Stephen Bathori, Prince of Transylvania, whom we shall later meet in connection with the history of Unitarianism in that country. When elected he was supposed to be a Protestant, but soon afterwards he openly professed the Catholic faith and married the sister of the late king, who was under Jesuit influence. The Jesuits therefore won his support, although through the thirteen years of his reign he maintained the liberties of the Protestants, and resisted all pressure to break his coronation oath to them, declaring that he was king only of people, but not of their consciences, which were subject to God alone.[1] Yet even in his reign the Catholic reaction began, and in the strongly Catholic capital of Krakow preaching against heretics so excited the populace that from 1574 on they formed mobs which sacked the Reformed church, outraged the Protestant cemeteries, and attacked Protestant inhabitants; and similar things were done at Wilno, the capital of Lithuania. The king indeed expressed his disapproval, but nothing effectual was done to punish these acts.

[1] He did however banish Christian Francken, a Socinian teacher of Chmielnik, for writing a work against the Trinity, and imprisoned Alexius Radecki for printing it.

During the long reign of Sigismund Wasa III (1587–1632), matters rapidly grew worse. Persecution of all Protestants increased, and whereas at the king's accession there were (beside the bishops) but few Catholics in the Senate, when he died the Protestants had only two members, their power was practically broken, and royal confirmation of their rights had become little more than a solemn farce. The "Jesuit king," as he was called, was a bigoted zealot. He had been brought up under the influence of the Jesuits, had joined their order, and even become a cardinal; and he did everything possible to favor them. Anti-Protestant riots, which the Jesuits stirred up among the lower classes, became more and more frequent at Krakow, where the Reformed church was at length burned and never rebuilt. In various other cities where Protestants were much in the minority the same sort of thing occurred, churches and schools were destroyed, and any attempt at punishing the outrages was blocked. At the same time the Jesuits were intriguing with the higher classes, all the highest offices were at their instigation given to Catholics, while the Protestant nobles were forced to content themselves with inferior offices and honors only. This in itself furnished a powerful temptation to a Polish noble to turn Catholic again, and many of them yielded to it.

Our main interest here, however, is with the persecution as it affected the Socinians. Open attacks on them began in this reign, and as they had fewer powerful patrons than the Reformed, they could not so successfully defend themselves. Their meeting-place at Krakow was destroyed by a mob in 1591. Three years later Socinus himself was attacked in the streets there and had his face smeared and his mouth filled with mud by order of a Polish knight who charged him with being an "Arian," and with having under-

mined his father's religious faith. When his work *On Christ the Savior* was published at Krakow in the same year, hatred against him flamed up afresh; and at length in 1598, when he was ill in bed, a mob led by students of the university broke into the house, sacked it and dragged him half-naked from his bed and through the streets to the market-place, where they burned his books and priceless manuscripts, and threatened to burn him too unless he would recant. He did not weaken even in sight of death, but when he saw a drawn sword above his head he calmly declared, "I will not recant. What I have been, that I am and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be till my last breath. Do whatever God allows you to do." When they saw that their threats could not frighten him, they set out to throw the stubborn heretic into the Vistula, and would have done so without more ado had not the rector and two of the professors of the university, though Catholics, rescued him by a ruse, at great risk to themselves.

The first actual martyr among the Socinians was Jan Tyskiewicz, a wealthy citizen of Bielsk. His relatives coveted his property, and therefore laid a plot against him. They forced him into the office of town treasurer, and then at the end of his year of office required him to take oath that he had faithfully discharged his duties. He wished to obey the command of Jesus and "swear not at all," though when pressed he yielded the point; but when ordered to swear either on the crucifix or by the Trinity he flatly refused, as it had been expected that he would do. He was thereupon accused of trampling the crucifix under foot and blaspheming against the Trinity, was insulted and flogged by the magistrate, and condemned to death and thrown into prison. He appealed to the Supreme Court, which declared him innocent and set him free, at the same time fining the

magistrate for imposing an unjust sentence. His enemies then appealed to the queen as ruler of this district, and she approved the original sentence and ordered it executed, whereupon the king and his Council passed this sentence of death: "Inasmuch as he has blasphemed, let his tongue be torn out; inasmuch as he has shown contempt of the magistrate to whom he was subject, and of her majesty's decree by which he was brought before the magistrate, by daring to appeal his case to the Supreme Court, let him be beheaded as a stubborn rebel; inasmuch as he has trampled upon the crucifix, let his hand and his foot be cut off; and finally, inasmuch as he is a heretic, let him be burned." Jesuits and monks now besought him to change his faith, promising to have the sentence revoked and his property restored; but he remained deaf to all threats or promises, and was led to the stake in the market-place at Warsaw, 1611.

From now on a systematic policy of extermination was pursued against the Socinians. One of them was torn in pieces by a fanatical mob at Wilno and the courts took no notice. Before long all the highest judges were Catholic, and one accused of heresy had little chance before them. There were sporadic cases all over the kingdom, but the first general attack took place at Lublin in 1627. Here the Socinians had long had one of their most flourishing churches, under the patronage of very distinguished nobles, and many synods had been held here, and many debates with their opponents. Irritated at the unfavorable results of these discussions, the Catholics at length raised a mob and destroyed the Socinian church, and from the Supreme Court which sat there got a decree abolishing the church forever. Despite the decree, secret worship was still maintained there for some years.

All their previous troubles, however, were as nothing in

comparison with the blow that fell upon the Socinians in the destruction of Rakow in 1638, by which, as one of them pathetically wrote not long after, "the very eye of Poland was put out, the asylum and refuge of exiles, the shrine of religion and the muses." A Catholic had set up a wooden crucifix by the roadside near the town. At this two boys from the school at Rakow (whether in wanton mischief or out of misguided religious zeal is not clear) threw stones till they had broken it down. They were duly punished by their parents, but this did not satisfy the Catholics, who were only too ready to seize this occasion for striking a killing blow at Socinianism. The boys themselves, after being arrested and brought before the Diet at Warsaw, were let go, and instead of them, at the instigation of the Bishop of Krakow, the whole community of "Arians" at Rakow was charged with responsibility for the sacrilege. First of all, Sieninski himself, the owner of the town and the patron of the church and school, was accused of treason against God and man; and the professors and ministers were accused of having put the students up to perpetrate their wicked act. No proof which they could offer of their innocence was admitted; nor did they regard the oath of Sieninski himself that the act had been done without his knowledge, though he was a man in his seventies, who had formerly sacrificed his fortune in behalf of his country, and had often been hailed in the Diet as the Father of his Country. His very son, whom he had allowed to be brought up in a Jesuit school and who had hence turned Catholic, turned against him. The protests of many members of the lower house of the Diet, of all religions, Catholic included, were disregarded. Most of the Protestant members were won over by the Jesuits to side against the Socinians as enemies of all Christianity, although some of them later confessed that they had

made a fatal mistake. The matter was not duly tried in court at all, nor even agreed upon by the whole Diet, but was disposed of in the Senate alone by summary process of law. It was decreed that the school at Rakow be demolished, the church taken from the "Arians" and closed, the press removed, the ministers, professors, and teachers branded with infamy and outlawed, all which, says the Catholic historian, "was executed with all imaginable diligence."

The church edifice was of course taken over by the Catholics, richly endowed, and dedicated to the Holy Trinity, with a suitable inscription over the door relating what had been done. Sieninski died within a year. The Socinian congregation, what was left of it, removed to a neighboring village, and there in the house of a new patroness continued as before to meet for worship thrice a week, and devoted all of Fridays to fasting and prayer; but the patroness died a few years later, her estate came into the possession of a Catholic, and the church became extinct. The ministers, though outlawed, found here or there a place where they might live in concealment, and after the feeling against them had somewhat subsided they at length became settled again over congregations in distant parts of the country.[1] The school was combined with that of Kisielin in Volhynia, and there continued its existence until abolished by a decree of court. After this the chief school of the Socinians was at Luclawice where Socinus had spent his last years, and Socinian books were published there. The press at Rakow was taken down the Vistula and set up at Danzig.

From now on blow followed blow in quick succession.

[1] A plan was discussed at this time for the Rakow Socinians to remove to more tolerant Holland, but this was interfered with by the action of the States General there, who were warned of it by the Prince of Transylvania.

One church after another was, on one pretext or another, closed by decree of the court. At Kisielin, where all the inhabitants are said to have been "Arians," and at Beresko near by, school and church were ordered razed to the ground in 1644, two ministers long since dead were branded with infamy, and the Socinian proprietor was forced to pay some 20,000 florins for harboring proscribed ministers, and he and his sons were forbidden to allow Socinian worship on their estates. Mobs in various places would sack the homes of prominent Socinians and assault their owners, even beating them to death. Preachers were repeatedly arrested and brought into court, and persecution seemed to follow them like a shadow. Schlichting, one of their most famous scholars, published a Confession of Faith in 1642, and for this was branded with infamy, proscribed, and compelled to spend several years in exile; while the book itself was publicly burned at Warsaw in 1647. In Protestant territory in the neighboring kingdom of Prussia, where the Socinian faith had by this time begun to spread among the Lutherans enough to arouse their alarm, a decree was issued in 1640 to prevent its further spread, and not long afterwards some Socinian leaders were banished from Danzig in circumstances of the most unfeeling cruelty.

With the destruction of Rakow, the end of Socinianism in Poland was already in sight, and it never recovered from the blow; but the inevitable was still further hastened by political events, and misfortunes now came thick, fast, and heavy. The first scene in the last act was furnished by the Cossack war. Socinianism had nowhere been more wide-spread and firmly established than in Volhynia, in southeastern Poland. In 1648 the Cossacks, whom an atrocious wrong done by a Polish noble to one of their chiefs had stirred up to avenge long-standing oppressions, filled with savage hatred, broke

out in rebellion, and swept like a whirlwind over all that part of the country as far as the Vistula, ravaging, pillaging, and destroying all with fire and sword.[1] Whole cities were wiped out, the atrocities upon the inhabitants were frightful, and many of them were carried into slavery. On account of religious hatred, the Cossacks, who were of the Eastern Church, were especially savage toward the Socinians. Many of these in the Ukraine were killed, and over a thousand of them in headlong flight left all they possessed behind them, and sought refuge with the brethren in Little Poland. The churches in this district were never re-established. The Cossacks were at length defeated, but they soon afterwards joined forces with the Russians and repeated in Lithuania [2] in 1654 the ruin they had wrought in Volhynia six years before; and here also most of the Socinian churches were either destroyed or else irreparably weakened.

The war with Russia dragged on for thirteen years, but before it was more than a year old the Protestant King Charles X of Sweden, taking advantage of Poland's prostrate condition, made war upon her, and within a short time had overrun a large part of the country, captured the capital at Krakow, and driven the Polish king over the border. Deserted by their own king, and pressed by the Russians in one quarter and the Cossacks in another, many of the Poles could do nothing for a time but submit to the king of Sweden. The Protestants doubtless may have done this willingly enough, for Charles treated them more kindly than he did the Catholics, and they had perhaps more to hope from a foreign Protestant monarch than from their own Catholic one. The Socinians submitted among the rest;

1 See Sienkiewicz, *With Fire and Sword.*

2 See Sienkiewicz, *The Deluge.*

and especially in Little Poland, where their Catholic neighbors were now taking advantage of the general anarchy to plunder their rich estates and murder them wherever found, many of them from the palatinate of Krakow fled to the capital in 1656 and sought and received the protection of the Swedish king as the only one who could guarantee their safety. Under this protection they remained for some time, again enjoying full liberty of worship.

By the next year the tide of war had begun to turn, and Charles found himself losing ground. He therefore called on Prince George Rakoczy II of Transylvania in 1657 to assist him by invading Poland from the south, and the latter, lured by a hope of winning the Polish crown for himself, hastened to respond to the call. His troops, savage as the Cossacks had been, ravaged the district nearest Hungary, where Socinian churches were numerous, and thus completed the devastation that had been wrought in the rest of the country. The fact that Socinian nobles were believed to have urged Rakoczy to intervene,[1] and that many of his followers were Unitarians in religion, must have given fresh ground for charging the Socinians with disloyalty, for they were accused of having intrigued with him against their own king.

When his fortunes were now at the lowest ebb, the Polish King John Casimir had made a solemn vow that if he won back his kingdom he would purge it of heresy; and when the Swedes had at length been expelled from the country, he set about to fulfill his vow, beginning with the Socinians, who were charged (however unjustly) with having been during the war the most disloyal of all, as well as the most hated and incidentally the weakest of the Protestant sects. The scattered brethren were only just beginning to come out of their

[1] Some of them had in fact gone to Transylvania to persuade the prince and had helped him prepare for the war.

hiding-places and to hope for the blessings of peace at last, when they were again attacked, their houses burned, their goods plundered, and themselves wounded or murdered. The Diet made only an empty response to their appeal for protection, and then proceeded in 1658 to enact a decree to expel the Socinians utterly and forever from the land. It revived a decree against heresy which in 1424, more than a century before the Reformation, had been passed against the Hussites, had long been obsolete, and had been virtually abrogated by the Diet; and deliberately disregarding the law of general toleration which had been passed in 1573 and had been solemnly confirmed by every monarch since then, including the reigning king, it passed a law that if any one were found in the realms daring to profess or spread or preach the Arian doctrine, or to protect or comfort its adherents, and were lawfully convicted thereof, he should be subject to the law referred to, and without delay be put to death; but since they desired to show mercy, if any such person were found unwilling to renounce his errors, he should be granted three years to collect his debts; though meanwhile he should hold no worship of his sect, nor hold any public office. There still remained, however, one Socinian member of the Diet, Tobias Wiszowaty, and he invoked the *liberum veto* [1] against the law; but so determined were the great majority to banish the Socinians at all costs that it was disregarded.

This law struck its victims like a thunderbolt; but as if it had given them too generous indulgence in granting them three years to settle up their affairs, the next Diet shortened

[1] The *liberum veto* had come into use a few years before, and was highly esteemed as a safeguard against infringing the liberties of members. By use of it a single member might block any proposed action, or even dissolve the Diet. It was repeatedly used, and often wrought great mischief.

the term to two years, fixing the final date as July 10, 1660, though reminding them that the law would not be enforced against those who returned to the Catholic Church. Some of the most wealthy nobles went over to the Reformed Church as the least of the evils, but this was soon forbidden by a new law. Many of the common people, having no means of leaving the country, in desperation professed the Catholic faith as the only alternative to death; though even of these some later returned to their former faith. Striking misfortunes soon after befalling some of these apostates were interpreted by those who had remained faithful as judgments of God upon apostasy. The Catholics on their part felt that they had their reward, for the king declared that from this time on he began to be more successful against his enemies, and the Pope honored him with the coveted title of Orthodox King.[1]

The Socinians, unable to believe that they must really suffer the cruel fate decreed against them, turned in every direction to find a way to avert it. They petitioned to the king, endeavoring to show that they agreed with the Catholics in fundamentals, since they accepted the Apostles' Creed; but in vain. Some of the Socinian nobles who had been under the protection of the Swedish king at Krakow, and had followed in his train when he withdrew from the city, sought his influence to get the Socinians included with the others who had adhered to the King of Sweden, in the amnesty provided for in the treaty of Oliva which made peace between Sweden and Poland; but Lutheran opposition prevented this. The Elector of Brandenburg, who had helped Poland to defeat Sweden, used his influence in their behalf, but to no purpose. As a last resort, three or four months before the ex-

[1] In 1664 he resigned his crown, and went to be abbot of a monastery in France.

piration of the time, many of the wealthiest Socinian nobles asked for a friendly discussion of the religious differences existing between themselves and the Catholics. The Bishop of Krakow gave his sanction, and the Governor of Warsaw opened his palace at Roznow for the purpose. In the end but few of the Socinians thought it safe to attend, but they were represented in debate by Andrew Wiszowaty, grandson of Socinus; while the Jesuits and other orders sent their ablest disputants. The debates lasted five whole days. Wiszowaty proved himself by far the ablest debater, and made a deep impression upon many of the Catholics present. One of his principal opponents confessed to the governor that had all the devils come out of hell they could not have defended their religion more ably than this one man. The result of the discussion was that the Catholics became somewhat milder in their persecution, and on the other hand that many of the wavering Socinians were confirmed to persevere in their faith. Every inducement was offered the Socinians to renounce their faith and return to the Catholic Church; and Wiszowaty was promised by the governor a life estate and a generous pension if he would change his religion, but he could not be moved.

Ever since the decree had been passed the Socinians had been generally treated as outlaws, and little protection had been afforded them. Happy were those who had taken early opportunity to dispose of their property. Those who waited until it was clear that there was no escape for them were able to sell only at the greatest sacrifices, some for a tenth of the real value, some for a twentieth, while some were unable to sell at all, and had to content themselves with a mere promise to pay, or to leave their property to well-disposed friends to sell for them. Meanwhile the faithful took every measure possible to preserve their churches and

their faith from extinction. At their synod in 1659 they laid all plans for holding worship and carrying on their church life in foreign lands as before, provided for publishing a book on the government of their churches; and that the memory of their past might not perish even though their children should at length live under other skies and forget the Polish tongue, they appointed one to write down their history.

At last the fateful day arrived, when those who could still do so took their departure, carrying with them only their most valued possessions. Many indeed were quite unable to get away at all. It was estimated that a thousand families were left behind in the greatest destitution, especially in the palatinate of Krakow, and these had to go into hiding in remote places, or to seek the protection of friends who ventured to take the risk. It was but a minority that were able to emigrate. Every inducement to become Catholic appealed to those who had still dared remain. Property, honors, and offices would at once be restored to them. On the other hand any who aided them in any way, or had the least intercourse with them, were subject to confiscation of property without remedy; and since many were suspected of still lying concealed or being protected in the kingdom, another decree was passed in 1661 charging officers to use all diligence to search out and arrest any who could be discovered in the country. All such were proscribed and their names posted at Warsaw, and without further hearing or opportunity for defense, all, whether women or girls, or those enfeebled by age or illness, were required to leave without the least delay, nor were even Socinian wives safe, whose husbands had turned Catholic. The husbands were fined for having "Arian" wives.

One of the ministers named Morsztyn at the risk of his

life stayed behind in Poland with his son to minister to the scattered Socinians, and he continued in this office as late as 1668. Wiszowaty also made his way back in the first winter to comfort the poor, the widows, and the orphans who had been unable to get away and who now flocked to him as soon as they heard of his arrival; and he repeated his visit the second winter. A synod was even held in Poland in great secrecy in 1662, at which two ministers were appointed to look after the brethren scattered throughout the land.

A deep thrill of horror and of sympathy ran through the more liberal Protestants of Europe over the cruelties of this exile and the sufferings of the Socinians, whose books had now for a generation or more been read and appreciated, and whose leaders were famous, in Holland and England. In response to an appeal, aid in generous amount was therefore raised by a Remonstrant pastor named Næranus in Holland, by a member of the Church of England named Firmin, whom we shall meet again in our history, and by Socinians living in Holstein; and this was carefully distributed among the suffering brethren in Poland or in exile, wherever any could be learned of. This distribution in Poland continued as long as five years after the banishment, but after that we have no further record of the survivors there.

We have seen that the banishment of the Socinians from Poland was brought about by coöperation between the Catholics and the orthodox Protestants. The latter did not realize that they were thus being used as tools to dig their own graves. It was not long, however, before they woke up to what they had done. With the Socinians once out of the way the Catholics soon began to increase their persecution of the other Protestants. The Bohemian Brethren, the next weaker sect, were expelled a year after the Socinians, and

by 1668 the power of Protestantism in Poland was practically crushed. In 1716 freedom of religious worship was forbidden to all Protestants except in their older churches; and in 1733 and 1736 their most important political rights were taken from them. When after a long struggle the old rights of Dissidents were again restored in 1767, it was too late to be of much good to the orthodox Protestant cause, which has never since had more than a feeble existence in Polish lands; and of course it was forever too late for the Socinians.[1]

[1] The treatment of these heretics in Poland in the seventeenth century was after all far better than in some other countries of Europe, though it was more conspicuous on account of the large numbers and high position of the Socinians, and was more aggravated by contrast with the previous policy of toleration. For while the rest of Europe in the seventeenth century was slowly growing more tolerant, Poland was rapidly growing less so. To Protestant critics the Catholics justified this treatment of heretics by citing the case of Servetus, and the writings of Calvin and Beza defending the capital punishment of heretics. It is now recognized by historians that one of the main causes of the downfall of the nation was its religious quarrrels and the intolerant policy promoted by the Jesuits.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SOCINIANS IN EXILE, 1660–1803

The history of religious persecution has scarcely a more pathetic and tragic chapter than that of the Socinian exiles from Poland. The sufferings of the Pilgrim Fathers are nothing in comparison to it. Many, as we have seen, were obliged to remain behind in Poland, though of these some doubtless managed to remove later. The rest must have been gradually absorbed in the other churches, or else have died off within a generation. Those that went into exile scattered in every direction, but we are able to trace six distinct colonies of them who held together for a longer or shorter time, in Transylvania, Silesia, the Rhine Palatinate, Holstein, Brandenburg, and Prussia, not to mention Holland, whither many from these various colonies eventually went, there at length to mingle with the liberal Dutch churches, in which they found a hospitable home.

The largest migration sought to find a new home in Transylvania where, as we shall see in the next division of this history, there had long been well organized churches of their own faith, with which they had maintained friendly if not intimate relations for nearly a century. Their petition to be received into that country, however, was for some reason at first denied by the prince then ruling. They therefore separated into two divisions and for a time found welcome with two Protestant nobles of Hungary. One of these di-

visions went to Kesmark in Szepes (Zips) County and was hospitably received by Count Stephen Thököly, who had a ready rebuke for an English clergyman who reproached him for thus sheltering heretics. It was here that Wiszowaty made the headquarters from which he returned for two winters to comfort the faithful remaining in Poland. What at last became of this colony does not appear, but as we hear little further of them, it is probable that they soon broke up, some of them following Wiszowaty to Silesia, while most of the rest proceeded before long to join their brethren in Transylvania.

The other division set out to seek the protection of Prince Francis Rhedei at Huszt in Marmaros County. They were a wretched company of more than 500, with a train of 300 wagons bearing such few household possessions as they could take with them. Hardly had they crossed the Carpathians into Hungary when they were set upon by a band of free-booting Hungarian soldiers known in the country as "the Devil's fiends," who were supposed to have been secretly informed and incited to the act from Poland. They were plundered of their possessions, their provisions, and even the clothes they wore, and were maltreated in every way. The larger part of them, staggered by this new calamity, turned back in despair to Poland and professed the Catholic faith, or else sought refuge in Prussia. The rest, destitute and half naked, but hardened to dangers, pushed on toward their destination. After spending the winter at Huszt, about 200 of them comprising some thirty families went on the next year, and at length reached the metropolis of Unitarianism at Kolozsvar. The brethren there had just been overrun by Turks and Tatars in the war then raging, and had themselves been plundered of nearly all that they had; but when they heard of the sad plight of their brethren from Poland,

they sent out wagons to meet them, supplied them with food and clothing, and gave them shelter. Yet here, in a strange and severe climate, and weakened by hardship and exposure, they were almost immediately attacked by the plague, and barely thirty of them survived it.[1] A new prince had now come to the throne, Michael Apaffi I, and when he offered them the shelter and protection which no other sovereign in Christian Europe would grant them, they made arrangements for permanent settlement in the country, after which others from Poland doubtless joined them. They were granted the rights of citizenship, and a church of their own was set aside for them to worship in; but they were long in extreme destitution, and even after fifty years they were still obliged to appeal to their more prosperous brethren in other lands for aid in supporting their church, their school, and the poor. Yet their numbers gradually increased, so that in 1707 they sent out colonies to other parts of the country, and for some time they had in all four churches. At about this time some of them planned to return to Poland, and funds were raised to assist them in doing so; but when the venture was made in 1711, the bare chimneys of their burned homes, and the religious hatred with which they were received by the inhabitants, discouraged them so much that the attempt was given up.

The Polish Socinians in Transylvania at length suffered the inevitable fate of any small colony in a strange land. The original exiles died, their children intermarried with the Transylvanians and became scattered, and thus they gradually forgot their mother tongue and became mingled with the surrounding population. As long as it was possible, they maintained worship in the Polish language and had Polish ministers; but it became more and more difficult

1 Compare the Pilgrims, and their first winter in America.

to secure ministers, and congregations gradually dwindled. The last Polish preacher at Kolozsvar died in 1792; and his congregation had already united with the Hungarian Unitarian Church there eight years before. The other three churches had become extinct considerably earlier. The descendants of the Polish exiles were not ungrateful to their Unitarian friends. Many of them rose to high position in public life and acquired wealth; and one of them named Augustinowics dying in 1837 left the Unitarian church a bequest of 100,000 florins, which long amounted to more than all the rest of the funds of the church combined.

A second company of exiles crossed over the western border of Poland into Silesia, where scattered Socinians had long lived, from among whom had come several well-known ministers to the Polish churches, and where yet more had lately settled as refugees before Rakoczy's invasion in 1657. Many were received under the protection of the Queen of Poland in her principalities of Oppeln and Ratibor where she shielded them from the attacks of the Catholic clergy; but as they were widely scattered they were able to form no congregation, and we hear no more of them.

A considerable number, however, including some of the most distinguished nobles and ministers, sought refuge just over the border at Kreuzburg, where they hoped to find toleration among Protestants who were themselves being threatened with persecution for their faith. They did not expect to settle here permanently, though they hoped to have indulgence from the Duke of Brieg, who was of the Reformed faith, until they could arrange their affairs in Poland, provide for the brethren left behind them, and make plans for a new home, if perchance there were no turn of fortune in their favor. Instead they were ordered to leave within three days. Some of them went on and thus disappear from

our view. The rest petitioned the Duke for leave to stay a few days longer, and when this leave had expired it was extended for three months more, on condition of their not carrying on any propaganda or holding public worship. By the time this period had elapsed, the prejudice against them had evidently subsided, and they were quietly tolerated and allowed to meet privately for worship in their own homes. Publicly they worshiped with the other Protestants. The Bohemian Brethren had tried hard to persuade the Duke not to let them stay, but the Lutheran ministers and citizens were in the main kind to them; and while they were not allowed to bury their dead in the Protestant cemetery, they were assigned a small one of their own. Although most of them were nobles, they were nearly all left poor, and knowing no trade, and being ignorant of the language of the country, they found the greatest difficulty in making a bare living. In this extremity the gifts of money received from Holland and England [1] were like manna from heaven; and the letter which twenty-six of them signed making acknowledgment of these gifts, and relating the story of their banishment and their present circumstances, is one of the most interesting documents in their whole history.

Kreuzburg was the most convenient center where the exiles might gather from the various quarters to which they had scattered. They therefore continued to hold their synods there, to which delegates came from Transylvania, Prussia, Brandenburg, and Holland, so that Kreuzburg became for the time a sort of capital for Socinianism, as Rakow had once been. After providing for their immediate necessities, the first care of the exiles here was for the brethren still remaining in Poland. During eight years they appointed ministers to return secretly to visit them and confirm them

[1] See page 179.

in their faith. They provided for the training of young ministers, and for the publication of controversial works and commentaries in support of their doctrines. They sent agents in various directions to see if a place could be found where they might settle; and these efforts proved more or less successful, so that by 1669 only three noble families and a few commoners remained of the Kreuzburg company. Most of them seem to have joined the exiles in Prussia, though a few scattered about in Silesia, to whom the brethren in Prussia for the next ten years sent back a minister each year to preach and administer the Lord's Supper. The last of these itinerant missionaries died while on his journey to them in 1680.

Another and smaller company of exiles settled in the Rhine Palatinate. It has been seen in a previous chapter that early in the Reformation the antitrinitarian Anabaptists were mercilessly persecuted in various parts of Protestant Germany;[1] and from that time on the German princes, strongly Lutheran in faith, had never shown the least tolerance to those that denied the doctrine of the Trinity. There had been repeated cases of expulsion of students in various German universities, or even of imprisonment or banishment, for being unsound on this point; various princes had issued decrees against deniers of the Trinity; and the few ministers who had ventured to follow Servetus or Socinus suffered imprisonment or exile, most of them taking refuge among the Socinians in Poland or the Unitarians in Transylvania. As early as about 1570 there had been a little group of these in the Palatinate itself, of whom one, Adam Neuser, had been imprisoned for ten long years at Heidelberg, and another, Johannes Sylvanus, had been put

[1] See pages 45–49.

to death, while yet others were banished, by the zealous Elector Frederick III, "the pious."

His great-great-grandson, the Elector Karl Ludwig, however, was more tolerant. Moravian Anabaptists had already built a church under his protection, and a number of Socinian refugees bringing their minister with them had already been kindly received. A Polish Socinian knight of great influence also helped secure favor for his brethren; and as the Elector was using every means to attract settlers to rebuild his city of Mannheim, long wasted by wars, he took pity on the exiles and granted them refuge there.

The synod at Kreuzburg in 1663 sent two of its best-known ministers, Wiszowaty and Stegmann, to prepare the way, and a company of exiles soon followed. They lived there three years, happy under the Elector's protection. They not only held their customary religious services for their own members in their private houses, and occasionally ministered to other exiles farther down the Rhine at Wied; but they also zealously tried to spread their faith among others by means of personal conversations and the circulation of their books. The Elector himself grew deeply interested in their views, and had many religious conversations with Wiszowaty; but when his subjects began to show the infection of heresy, the Lutheran clergy took notice and had the Socinians haled into court at Heidelberg, where they were forbidden henceforth to discuss religion with any one, or to circulate their books. This restriction at once took away half of what made life there seem worth living for them; a war broke out with Lorraine; and a visitation of the plague attacked a great part of the inhabitants. They therefore decided to emigrate. Some of them may have returned to Silesia or removed to Prussia, but most went

with Wiszowaty to Holland where he had formerly studied and had many warm friends among the Dutch, where many of the brethren already were, and where we shall soon meet them again.

A fourth band of exiles found a brief refuge in the duchy of Holstein. Stanislaw Lubieniecki, a famous Socinian courtier and scholar, had intimate relations with various courts in Europe.[1] He had followed in the train of the King of Sweden when the latter left Krakow; and when he at last saw no hope of being permitted to return home, he went to Copenhagen, hoping to find a place of refuge for the exiles in the realm of King Frederick III of Denmark. Here he so much won the regard of the king that the apprehension of the Lutheran theologians at court was aroused lest the king, with whom he often talked on religion, should become an "Arian." He at first secured royal permission for the exiles to settle at Altona; but later, upon request of the secret synod held in Poland in 1662, he sought a place of settlement for them at Friedrichstadt, where Remonstrant and Mennonite refugees from Holland, and Quakers from England, had been received and tolerated. He obtained permission from the local government for the exiles to settle there with full enjoyment of civil and religious rights, and to hold religious worship in private houses after their custom. He then sent word to the brethren living on the borders of Poland, and incurred very large expense to help them remove that same year (1662) to their new home, where they established a congregation with their own minister, and sought, though with no success, to effect

[1] It was he that had won the favor of the Elector Karl Ludwig for the exiles at Mannheim (page 187). He was own cousin to the next Polish King, John III.

a union with the Mennonites or the Remonstrants who were living there as religious refugees like themselves.

Unfortunately permission to settle had not also been obtained from Christian Albert, the ruling Duke of Holstein, and it was not long before he was persuaded by the Lutheran superintendent to command them to leave his territories. They therefore went on to Holland, where many of their brethren were now gathering from different quarters. Lubieniecki took up his residence at Hamburg, where he held important diplomatic offices, and incidentally made use of his opportunities with people in high station to interest them in his religious views. After he had lived there several years, however, the clergy secured his banishment from the city on the ground that he had corrupted the religious faith of a Lutheran divinity student; though before the sentence could be carried out, he died of poison in suspicious circumstances. Even then the clergy used all their influence to prevent the burial of his body in the church at Altona, and having failed in this they still prevented the usual funeral honors from being paid.

A fifth group of exiles established themselves under the rule of the Great Elector Frederick William in the Mark of Brandenburg, and formed churches at several places not far from Frankfurt on the Oder, having for their last settled minister Samuel Crellius, member of one of the most famous families of Socinian scholars and preachers. Yet nothing could save them from succumbing to their environment. In a generation or two their descendants were speaking only German. Their numbers grew steadily fewer. In 1718 only some twenty-five adult males remained, and in 1725 Crellius gave up his charge. After this the members were annually visited for some time by a minister from the churches in

Prussia, who preached and administered the sacraments to the survivors; but by 1758 they had completely vanished. How seriously these exiled Socinians took their religion is illustrated by the letter which two brothers Widawski, officers in the Prussian army, wrote to Crellius in 1717, asking whether, being far from any church of their own faith, they might partake of the Lord's Supper in the Reformed Church.

Crellius went from Brandenburg to England, where he formed the acquaintance of numerous liberal divines in the English Church, and thence to Holland, where he died in 1747. He left two sons, Stephen and Joseph, of whom it is related that when they were studying at a gymnasium in Berlin they were told that they might stay there no longer unless they would join the Reformed Church, since otherwise the gymnasium would get a bad reputation. They did not yield to the demand. They later emigrated to America among the first settlers of the colony of Georgia, where the former became a justice of the peace, and the latter a planter. They are the only Polish Socinians known to have come to America.

The last country in which the Socinians tried to establish a new home was the duchy of Prussia (now East Prussia), which like Brandenburg was governed by the Great Elector. The prevailing religion here was Lutheran, though the Elector himself was Reformed, and disposed to be tolerant. When he came into power in 1640 he appointed as governor of the province his relative Prince Boguslaw Radziwill, who in the war with Sweden had helped to make Prussia independent of Poland. One of his ancestors had given his powerful protection to the early Antitrinitarians in Lithuania, where he had himself enjoyed close relations with the Socinians; while his cousin Janus had defended them at the

Diet of Warsaw in 1638 in the debate over the destruction of Rakow.[1] The governor was therefore disposed to protect the Socinians to the limit of his power, so that many of them came to Prussia in 1660, chiefly from Lithuania which lay just over the border. He made one of them his secretary, and had others in positions of influence in his court at Königsberg; while the Elector also had several of them among his councilors. With such powerful friends at court, many of the exiles sought refuge in various parts of Masuria, hoping to be allowed to live there quietly under the governor's protection; and several of them acquired large estates there on which the brethren might live around them in villages in the old Polish fashion, and establish congregations for worship. Stragglers thus kept arriving for several years from Poland or from the other exile colonies.

No sooner had the exiles arrived, however, than the Lutheran clergy began incessantly to work for the banishment of these "Arians." They got edicts to this effect passed against them, and the right of holding public worship was denied them. Meanwhile they must have had some assurance from friends at court that though decrees might be passed to pacify the Lutherans, the governor would be slow to execute them; for in 1662 they organized a church at Konsinowo (Andreaswalde), and later one at Rudawki (Rutow). They also sent delegates to synods at Kolozsvar and Kreuzburg, held synods of their own, received aid for their poor from their friends in Holland and England, and sent aid to the exiles at Kolozsvar. Nevertheless the fear of banishment constantly hung like a sword of Damocles over their heads, for it could never be predicted when the Lutherans might bring upon the Elector pressure too great

[1] See page 170.

for him to resist. To forestall such a fate the governor's secretary, Przypkowski, addressed to the Elector in 1666 an eloquent defense of those so unjustly persecuted (*Apologia Afflictæ Innocentiæ*), in which he corrected common misstatements as to their doctrines, showed how peaceable and inoffensive they were, and pointed to the examples of toleration shown them in Transylvania, Silesia, the Palatinate, and Holland. The edict was not withdrawn, but the Elector connived at their staying a while longer. Not long afterwards they even established a congregation with a minister at Königsberg; and they presented to the Elector a confession of their faith, carefully based on Scripture throughout, free from controversy, and calculated to soften prejudice against them.

Their friend the governor died in 1669, and the Lutherans thereupon obtained another edict from the Elector denying them further toleration, but again they appealed to his sympathy, mercy, and sense of justice; and while the orthodox kept urging that the decree be enforced, he on his part recommended to his Council to be mild. Feeling that they were in imminent danger, however, the Socinians now sought the intercession of the King of Poland, who wrote urgent letters to the Elector, the new governor, and the Ministers of State, pleading the distinguished ancestry of the exiles, and asking toleration for them as former subjects of Poland.

This appeal was effective, and from now on the Elector strove to protect the Socinians. They had indeed to take care not to arouse the Lutherans by doing anything to spread their faith, as by holding public services, engaging in religious discussions, or circulating their books; but within these limits they now went on for more than a hundred years leading a quiet, normal church life. They held regular synods, kept in touch with the exiles in other lands,

sent their young ministers to Holland for training, and maintained their traditional standards of morals and piety. Now and then they had to be admonished not to engage in propaganda, but for the most part they were no longer seriously molested.

They built a church and school at Konsinowo in 1721, and for a time they grew bolder; and their influence began to spread so much that the Lutheran clergy became alarmed, and public worship was again forbidden in 1730. However it might be delayed, the inevitable fate of a weak minority surrounded by a people of another faith could not be finally escaped. It was to avoid just such a fate in Holland that the Pilgrims emigrated from there to America. Their number steadily declined. In the course of time some died. Some removed to Holland or England, Transylvania or Poland. Some married Lutheran or Reformed wives, and their children were brought up in another faith. They continued to hold their worship in Polish, but at length for their children they had to use a German catechism along with their Polish one. They were debarred from public office, public honors, privileges, and the professions; they could not get permanent title to property or make profitable investments. By 1750 they had lost connection with the brethren in Transylvania, and the smaller of their two little churches became extinct with the death of its minister in 1752. When the congregation at Konsinowo wished a few years later to build a new church, they were long delayed by litigation over the property. When in 1776 they at length got leave from King Frederick the Great to build, with full freedom of public worship granted, they had grown so few and poor that after twelve years only some materials had been collected, and it is doubtful whether the new church was ever built at all. For in 1767 nominal religious freedom

had been restored in Poland, and it is more than likely that some of the Socinians then returned to their ancestral home. Their last minister, Schlichting, died about 1803, and the surviving members sold and divided the church property in 1811. Thus expired the last Socinian church in history.

Individual Socinians still continued to live in Prussia, holding true to the faith of their fathers, and some of them holding responsible public offices. The last recorded sentiment of any of them has a surprisingly modern sound: "that true religion consists not in name or form, but in uprightness of life." Two aged Socinians were still reported in the religious statistics of Prussia for 1838, a Schlichting and a Morsztyn, and the last survivor died in 1852. Long before that date, however, the free faith for which the Socinians of Poland had gone through over two centuries of persecution at home or in exile, had won fuller freedom and made greater conquests, under happier conditions, in England and America than they perhaps ever dreamed. There we shall follow the story a little later. Meantime we have to turn to a land of considerable religious freedom, which served as a sort of bridge over which Socinianism was to pass from Poland to England. We must trace the little known history of Socinianism in Holland.

CHAPTER XX

SOCINIANISM IN HOLLAND, 1598–1750

While we have seen in the previous chapter that two of the companies of Socinian exiles bravely maintained their churches for far over a century, it may already have been noticed that from all these exile colonies the roads seemed to lead at last to Holland. There we are able to trace the influence of the Socinian spirit and teaching long after the last Socinian church had perished. The way for the exiles had long been preparing in Holland. We have found antitrinitarian Anabaptists there near the beginning of the Reformation, and their leaven continued to work among the people long after they themselves had been put to silence. Individual Antitrinitarians were found in Holland all through the sixteenth century, and each of them must have had his considerable circle of followers, though only one of them is known to have had any connection with the movement in Poland. They were all of them more or less subjected to persecution. William (the Silent) of Orange, however, made freedom of worship one of the conditions of peace with Spain in 1578; and although this was by no means always observed, and religious persecution was occasionally practiced down to nearly the middle of the eighteenth century, complete religious toleration remained a sort of national ideal from William on. Despite all lapses, and the fact that public worship was not strictly legal except for the Reformed Church, Holland was still in 1660 the

only country in Protestant Europe which professed to grant religious toleration to all citizens on its soil.

The first Socinians to introduce their faith into Holland were Ostorod and Wojdowski, two ministers from Poland, who while visiting the University of Leiden in 1598 sought to make converts among the students there by conversations and by circulating books which they had brought with them. They won to their way of thinking a German student named Ernest Soner who, as we have already seen,[1] afterwards did so much for their cause when he was teaching at Altorf. They also made the acquaintance of the young Arminius, who was later to lead a movement against Calvinism and pave the way for Methodism; and although they did not make an Antitrinitarian of him, yet it is hard not to believe that they did plant liberal seeds in his mind, and persuade him to accept some of the principles of Socinianism. For it began a generation later to be persistently charged that he had himself been a Socinian, and his followers in the Remonstrant Church showed much sympathy with the Socinians who came to Holland. The authorities had these two under suspicion almost from the day of their arrival, and seizing their books submitted them to the Leiden theologians, who pronounced their teaching little better than Mohammedanism. A trial was had, and after various delays it was ordered that the books be publicly burnt, and that their owners leave the country within ten days. After this it was several years before Socinianism again made any stir in Holland.

A dozen years later a liberal wing in the Reformed Church had begun to oppose the extreme doctrines of Calvinism; and when their leader, Arminius, died, Conrad Vorst was appointed his successor as professor in the University

[1] See page 158.

of Leiden. It was not long before he was charged with being a Socinian. Though he himself denied the charge, King James I of England believed it, had one of his books publicly burnt in 1611, and himself wrote a confutation of it, and finally protested to the Dutch government against their tolerating such a heretic.[1] Agitation against him was kept up for some years; and the end was that in 1619 he was removed from his chair as a heretic, and was banished from the country. Three years later he died in exile in Holstein, hunted to death by his persecutors.

These persecutions however, were not enough to keep Socinianism from spreading in the country. Polish students kept coming to study in Dutch universities, especially after Altorf had been closed to them, and of course they embraced every opportunity to spread their views. The orthodox became alarmed, for they considered all this as blasphemy against God. Their synods kept urging that this heresy destroyed all Christianity and the hope of immortality, and that it ought to be severely repressed, lest Holland get a bad name in the Christian world; and they induced the States General to pass decrees against Socinianism in 1628, though as the magistrates in the larger towns were much disposed to be tolerant, little came of them.

The Remonstrants had by now separated from the Reformed Church, and within a generation several of their professors and many of their ministers were known to be more or less Socinian in their thought; while professed disbelievers in the Trinity were received into many Dutch churches without objection. More than once, therefore, the brethren in Poland sent their most persuasive embassador to try to bring about some sort of union with the Remonstrants

[1] It was at this period that the Pilgrims were sojourning at Leiden, 1609–1620.

in Holland. When the latter had been for a time driven into exile by the Reformed, the Polish brethren offered them aid if in need, or a refuge in Poland; and again during their brief stay at Friedrichstadt they tried to form a union with the Remonstrants living in exile there.[1] But there were too many points of difference between them, and though they willingly gave individual Socinians a tolerant welcome in their churches, the Remonstrants steadily denied that they were Socinians; nor indeed were they, save in occasional points of agreement.

When the Socinians were driven from Rakow in 1638, many of them sought refuge in Holland. This caused a fresh outburst of opposition against them, and further attempts to repress them. The Reformed synods took action against Socinians almost every year, and petitioned the States General to put them down. The States General in turn repeatedly caused proclamations against them to be posted, and passed laws forbidding the printing or sale of Socinian books, or the holding of Socinian meetings, on pain of heavy fines, imprisonment, or banishment for blasphemy. Though books were now and then seized and burnt, the printing of them mostly went on as before; they were sold and read, and Socinianism steadily spread among the people. For as in Prussia,[2] so here, though the government might try to pacify the orthodox by passing the laws they desired against "the blasphemous and wicked Socinians and their impious heresies," as the Synod of Dort called them, yet it would do little to enforce them.

This was the general situation when the Socinians were finally banished from Poland in 1660—Socinian views working like an invisible leaven all over Holland, Socinian books

[1] See page 188.
[2] See pages 191, 192.

being widely read, Socinians everywhere making personal converts, and Socinian scholars in friendly intercourse or active correspondence with many of the leaders of Dutch thought. It was not long before considerable numbers of the exiles found their way to Holland, to join their brethren already established there. There can not have been a great many of them altogether: counting those that had come after their expulsion from Rakow in 1638, those that may have straggled along from time to time as persecutions grew heavier in Poland, and those that came after their banishment in 1660, there were probably only a few hundred, perhaps not more than a few score, though these were destined to exert a great influence. The liveliest sympathy was felt for them. When the exiles sent out a pitiful appeal for help in their distress, some Remonstrant ministers gathered a large sum of money and sent it to the brethren at Kreuzburg for distribution;[1] and a generation later, in response to a similar appeal, a generous sum was sent to the Unitarians in Transylvania, whose church and school had been destroyed by fire.

The Socinians in Holland had no recognized leader about whom to gather, and they made no attempt to establish churches there. They had never wished, indeed, even in Poland, to form a separate religious body, and had done so only when excluded from the Reformed Church there. In Holland this was not necessary. For instead of being universally outcast as heretics, they were graciously received, in spite of their differences of belief, at the worship and sacraments of the tolerant Remonstrants and Mennonites. They seem for a little while to have held meetings for worship among themselves in their private homes, but these can not have been continued long; for they soon found in

[1] See pages 179, 185.

many of the Dutch congregations the fellowship they had so long craved, being treated not as strangers and foreigners, but as Christian brethren.

We must now turn to see how the influence of the Socinians was exercised in various quarters, first of all among the Remonstrants, whom we have several times mentioned already. Protesting against the strict Calvinism of the Dutch Reformed Church, these had been driven out of it in 1619. For several years they were banished from the country by the orthodox. They were opposed to the bondage of creeds, taking only the Bible as their authority. They strongly advocated religious freedom, and tolerance of differences of belief; and they tended toward a more liberal theology. All these things were calculated to create sympathy between them and the Socinians, and twice in time of persecution attempts had been made to bring about a union between them.[1] Several books, indeed, were published by Socinians on the one hand or by the orthodox on the other, to make out that the two were in essential harmony with each other. Yet though they agreed in their bottom principles, there was too wide a difference in their particular beliefs. In especial, the Remonstrants as a whole could not accept the Socinian view of the Trinity, the nature of Christ, and the atonement. They were repeatedly charged with being Socinians, and as often they denied the charge, consistently declining the Socinian name, and rejecting the most distinctive Socinian doctrines. Nevertheless the thought of the Remonstrants came to be profoundly influenced in the Socinian direction. Their leading theologians adopted more and more of the Socinian way of thinking; some of them translated and published Socinian works; and the result was that after two or three generations more than

[1] See pages 155, 189, 197.

half the distance that had separated them had become closed up.

If Socinianism influenced the Remonstrant churches mostly by the effect it had upon the thought of their leading thinkers and scholars, in another quarter, among the Collegiants, it won wide and deep influence over the common people. These were not a separately organized sect, but simply a group of congregations made up of lay members of other churches, who came together frequently to hold what may best be described as prayer-meetings (*collegia*, hence their name). At the time when the Remonstrant ministers had been banished from the country, these meetings began to be held among the laymen, in order that even if they had no minister to preach to them they might still have some sort of religious worship; and they succeeded so well that even after the ministers returned they were continued independently of the organized churches, and were maintained till near the end of the eighteenth century. These *collegia* were held in some thirty of the Dutch cities and villages, with a sort of headquarters at Rijnsburg, near Leiden. They consisted simply of Scripture, prayer, hymns, and speaking by whoever wished to take part. The Collegiants had no creed, and they encouraged the greatest freedom of speech and the most perfect tolerance of differing views. Socinians early began to attend these meetings, and as they were permitted to speak their views as freely as any, they found here a great opportunity for spreading their faith. Although the Collegiants were by no means wholly converted to them, these views found more friends among them than in any other religious body in Holland; and in the opinion of many, the Collegiants were nothing but Socinians under another name. Some of them indeed openly advocated Socinian teachings, and two of their

leaders were even invited to become teachers in the Socinian school at Rakow. At Amsterdam, where some of the most prominent Socinians had joined them, they published a Dutch translation of the Racovian Catechism in 1659, as well as of Servetus on the Trinity, and of various other works by Socinus and his followers. But perhaps the most marked service which they rendered to the cause was when one of the Collegiants had collected and published in eight stately folio Latin volumes the works of the leading Socinian scholars (the *Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum*), which were sold at a very low price, were widely circulated among the educated, and had a wide and deep influence upon the religious thinking of Holland and other lands.

Although the Collegiants were at first made up entirely of Remonstrants, after a generation or so by far the largest number of them came from the Mennonites,[1] with whose principles and practices they had much in common. The Collegiant movement thus became a sort of bridge over which Socinianism passed freely into the Mennonite Church, whose religious and moral life it was to influence as deeply as it had influenced religious thought among the Remonstrants. It may be remembered that the Mennonites were originally gathered together out of the Anabaptists who had survived the persecutions of the time of Luther;[2] and that in the beginnings of the antitrinitarian movement in Poland the Anabaptists were very influential, and that many of their views were cherished by the later Socinians.[3] The Socinians thus had from the start more in common with the Mennonites than with any one else in Holland. Both objected to the use of creeds, and took their religion directly

[1] See page 46.
[2] See page 46.
[3] See pages 140–142, 163.

from the Bible; both emphasized practical Christian life far more than any particular doctrine; both tried literally to follow the teaching of Jesus; both preferred baptism by immersion. Such points of contact had long drawn them into sympathy with each other. Ostorod and Wojdowski, therefore, before they left Holland, had tried to interest one of the Mennonite leaders; and as early as 1606, through the medium of a Mennonite congregation at Danzig which had friendly relations with the Socinians there, it was attempted to bring about a formal union between them. Negotiations to this end were in progress for several years, and for a time they promised to succeed; but at length the proposal was regretfully declined by the Mennonite leaders in Holland, on the ground that they had not yet become enough agreed among themselves to be ready to undertake union with others.[1] They may also well have hesitated to imperil the freedom of worship which they had so hardly won, by formally uniting with a body far more heretical than themselves.

Like the Remonstrants, the Mennonites were repeatedly accused of being Socinians, and they invariably denied the charge. Of course they never completely agreed with the Socinians. Nevertheless, by way of the Collegiants and otherwise, Socinianism gradually spread among the Mennonites all over the country until one of their two factions became frankly liberal on most points of belief; and when in 1722 the 150 Mennonite ministers of Friesland were called upon by the local government to subscribe to a Trinitarian confession of faith, they refused almost to a man.

Though among the other bodies of which we have spoken Socinianism steadily worked as a leaven, and thus doubtless had greater influence than it could have enjoyed had it ex-

[1] See page 155.

isted as a separately organized church, yet on the Reformed Church in Holland it never made any impression. On the contrary, the Reformed leaders for two generations kept publishing books against it, passing hostile resolutions in their synods, and continually spurring the States General up to action. At length, however, even the Reformed preachers gradually became reconciled to the presence of Socinianism in the land, and no longer feared the danger of the heresy as they once had done, so that the opposition gradually flattened out. Intolerance lasted longest in Friesland, where the last act of persecution of Socinians was in 1742. From that time on the Socinians are scarcely heard of any more: they had lost their separate identity, and had become absorbed into the general religious life of the country.

Much influence as Socinianism had in Holland, however, it must not be supposed that the influence was all on one side; for it was itself also influenced not a little by what it found in Holland. After their banishment from Poland the churches in exile usually sent their young ministers to the Remonstrant seminary at Amsterdam to be trained,[1] and the liberal professors there naturally influenced the course of their thought. The changes that thus took place in later Socinianism are to be seen in the later editions of the Racovian Catechism. Its doctrines became nearer to those of the Remonstrants. The system of belief taught by Socinus had in some respects been rather cold and rigid; but as influenced by the Remonstrants Socinianism became broadened and enriched. Instead of still taking its doctrines only from the Bible, it now came to rely more upon reason; it now made a personal faith in God the central

[1] See page 193.

thing in religion, instead of an intellectual belief about God and Christ; it learned to attach more importance to the death of Christ; and it abandoned some of the extreme Anabaptist views of the earlier time. In fact, so much had their doctrine become changed from that of their fathers that some of the later Socinians declared that they were no longer Socinians, but Unitarians, and that few or no real Socinians any longer existed.

On the other hand, the contribution of Socinianism to Dutch Christianity was large and permanent. Whether its particular doctrines were accepted or not, its spirit prevailed, and that was the really important thing. As the spirit of tolerance which Socinus had so much emphasized spread, greater stress came to be laid on moral conduct and practical Christian life, and less on belief or feeling; and the Bible came to be studied not, as before, chiefly for the sake of supporting certain dogmas, but in the more reasonable way used by the Socinian teachers, and in the free spirit of modern liberal scholarship.

It is at this point that we must take our leave of Socinianism, for it is here that it crosses over into England, enters upon a new stage, and presently takes a new name. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries England had closer relations with Holland than with any other country. Many Socinian books published in Holland were circulated in England and made converts there; in time of religious persecution many English Protestants sought refuge in Holland; and many English ministers received their training there. By these means the Socinian principles of freedom, reason, and toleration, as well as many of the Socinian doctrines, were taken to England and deeply influenced its religious thought and life. How this new stage developed re-

mains to be told in later chapters.[1] Meanwhile we must first turn back for a time to Transylvania, where a movement of Unitarian thought began at almost the same time as in Poland, and instead of becoming extinct there also, has continued an unbroken existence down to our own day.

[1] One slender thread of influence seems to connect the Socinianism of Holland with the Unitarianism of America; for Dr. van der Kemp, who had been a Mennonite preacher at Leiden, and was there known for his liberal tendencies, emigrated to America in 1788, where a few years later he became one of the founders of a liberal church at Trenton, N. Y., which in due time became a part of the Unitarian movement.

DIVISION IV

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA

CHAPTER XXI

DOWN TO THE BEGINNING OF UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA IN 1564

If asked when and where Unitarianism was first organized, the average person would be likely to answer that it was in America, or perhaps in England, about the beginning of the nineteenth century. He would be greatly amazed to be told that in a remote country of Europe Unitarian churches have had an unbroken history for more than three hundred and fifty years. That country is Transylvania, and we come now to the story of the heroic struggle of churches which began there at almost the same time with the separate organization of the Minor Reformed Church in Poland (whose tragic history has occupied the six preceding chapters), and which have bravely weathered all storms of persecution and misfortune down to the present day—hence by far the oldest Unitarian churches in the world.

Transylvania formed (until the World War) the eastern quarter of the old kingdom of Hungary, to which it bore much the same relation as Scotland to England. It is about half as large as the state of Maine, or a quarter larger than Switzerland; hedged in on all sides by the lofty snow-capped Carpathians and other mountains, forest-covered, as the name of the country implies. It has a great variety of grand and beautiful natural scenery, and has been called the Switzerland of Hungary. One traveler writes that

whereas other lands are beautiful in spots, Transylvania is all beauty; while another calls it a sort of earthly paradise. It has an agreeable climate, a fertile soil, and great mineral wealth; and ever since Roman times its mines have supplied a large part of the gold of Europe.

So much for the physical background of our story. The history of the country has yet more to do with the development of it. Located on the extreme frontier of western Europe, facing other civilizations, Transylvania has been in the natural path of conquest, and during sixteen centuries has been repeatedly overrun by armies. Early in the second century Trajan conquered it for the Romans, and it thus became the Roman province of Dacia Mediterranea. Trajan's Column at Rome still stands to commemorate the conquest, and shows us how the inhabitants of that time looked. Then came various hordes of barbarians invading the Roman Empire, generally striking Transylvania first of all, plundering the land, destroying its towns and houses, and killing its people: the Goths in the third and fourth century; the Huns in the fifth, led by Attila, who struck such terror into Christian Europe that he was called "the scourge of God," sent to punish the world for its sins; after them the Burgundians, Gepidæ, Lombards, and Avars, all leaving ruin and death in their train. Of all these it is the Huns that are of greatest interest to us, because when they retreated eastward after their defeats in France and Italy, the remnants of Attila's horde are said to have been stranded in the foothills of eastern Transylvania, and there settled in what is now known as Szeklerland. The reputed descendants of these, called Szeklers, form the bulk of the the Unitarians, a farmer people, having special political privileges, and hence called "nobles," a sort of peasant aristocracy, altogether a very fine stock.

In the ninth century, under Arpad, came nearly a million Magyars, related to the Huns, and speaking the same tongue with them. After ravaging Europe for two generations, they finally settled in Hungary, where they have lived ever since in their whitewashed villages—another fine race, fond of liberty, and with a spirit and institutions not unlike those of the English and Americans. Most of them are Calvinists or Roman Catholics. In the thirteenth century a new element gradually came in from the eastern shores of the Adriatic, the Wallacks, whose descendants (now known as Rumanians) speaking a modern form of the Latin tongue, now comprise over half of the population: the peasantry of the land, picturesque, ignorant, degraded, and adhering chiefly to the Greek Catholic Church. In the thirteenth century also came another deluge of half a million Mongol Tatars, ravaging and plundering, burning and butchering, leaving three quarters of Hungary in ashes; while if their invasion was frightful, the repeated invasions of the Turks in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the bloody uprising of the Rumanians in 1848, and last of all the desolations of the World War, have been hardly less so; and all these misfortunes have been further aggravated by the frequent plagues and famines that have followed in their wake. These afflictions have made of the survivors a heroic and self-reliant race, inured to hardship, indomitable in spirit, and devoted to freedom; as indeed they needed to be to face all the persecutions they were to suffer for their religious faith.

Besides the Rumanians, the Szeklers, and the Magyars, of whom we have spoken, the remaining important element of the population of to-day are the "Saxons," as they are called, all of them Lutherans in religion. They were brought from the region of the lower Rhine in the twelfth

century to settle and guard the frontier country, which repeated wars had left a wilderness;[1] and in their isolation from the fatherland they still preserve little changed the language, customs, and dress of mediæval Germany. Gypsies, Armenians, and Jews scattered here and there through the country complete the list of distinct stocks which people Transylvania, living side by side as separate as drops of oil and water, and differing from one another in race, in language, in religion, and in customs—a most interesting patch-work of people. Amid such surroundings Unitarianism has had its longest home.

After being for several centuries a part of the Kingdom of Hungary, the Transylvanian nobles in 1526 elected a king from among their own people, John Zapolya, and during the ten years' war which followed they maintained their cause against Hungary by the aid of the Sultan; and in return for his protection they continued to pay him annual tribute for more than 150 years, electing their princes subject to his approval, though in other respects they had an independent state until 1690, when Transylvania was joined to Austria. King John had for his queen, Isabella, daughter of King Sigismund I of Poland, but he died in 1540, only a few days after she had borne him a son, John Sigismund, whom the nobles elected King of Hungary soon after his father's death. He is notable for being the only Unitarian king in history.[2] The young king was born to troubles, for there was in western Hungary also a rival king, supported in his claim by the Pope, as John was in his by the Sultan, and he looked with envious eyes upon Transylvania. Taking advantage of John's infancy, and

[1] They settled seven fortified towns, which enjoyed special privileges. Hence the German name for Transylvania, *Siebenbürgen*.

[2] Moses Szekely, who ruled as elected prince for but a few weeks in 1603, might also be mentioned. See page 249.

of the inexperience of the Queen-mother Isabella, who was acting as regent in his stead, he kept intriguing against Transylvania in every way possible. The result of many vicissitudes in the matter was that although John was nominallly King of Hungary, with dominions extending to the Tisza (Theiss), he actually held not much more than Transylvania alone; and in 1570, as the price of peace with the Emperor Maximilian II, it was agreed at the Diet of Speyer that he should lay aside his empty title of king and his claim to the Hungarian crown, in return for the acknowledgment of Transylvania's independence of Hungary. He died the following year. It is in his reign that the history of Unitarianism in Transylvania begins.

Christianity is said to have reached Hungary even before Trajan, and the Goths in the fourth century fostered the Arianism which they professed. At the end of the eighth century, however, the Avars were converted to Catholic Christianity under Charlemagne, and when Transylvania was conquered in 1002 by St. Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary, its inhabitants perforce accepted his religion. Hungary was too far away from Rome, however, and the Hungarians were of too independent spirit, for the Roman Church to gain complete power there. The simple, scriptural form of Christianity taught by the Albigenses and Waldenses was widely spread from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and the reformation of the Hussites won many adherents a century later; and much persecution failed to suppress these heresies. The soil was thus well prepared for the Protestant Reformation.

As early as 1520 Saxon merchants returning from Germany brought Luther's books to Transylvania, where they found many eager readers; while two monks returning from Wittenberg preached the Reformation. Severe laws were

passed to prevent the spread of the heresy, some books were seized and burnt, and two persons were put to death by John Zapolya; but wars were on hand, the laws were not much enforced, and so the Reformation spread more rapidly in Hungary than in any other land. By 1535 all the Saxons had become Lutherans, and the Magyars and Szeklers rapidly followed, until at length only three of the magnates remained faithful to the Catholic Church, and even these attended Protestant worship. In 1556 the Catholic priests were driven out, and the church property was confiscated or given over to the Protestants; Hungarian students went in hundreds every year to Wittenburg to prepare for the Protestant ministry, and Catholicism seemed all but extinct. Nevertheless at the Diet of Torda in 1557 legal toleration of both religions was established when Isabella decreed, 'in order that each might hold the faith which he wished, with the new rites as well as with the old, that this should be permitted him at his own free will.' Save for the similar decree in the Grisons in 1526,[1] this was the first law in Christian Europe guaranteeing equal liberty to both religions.[2] The principle of full toleration to all religions was slow in developing, and was not realized until very long afterwards.

At this same Diet of Torda it was decided to establish a national synod where the Protestant ministers might soberly discuss the serious differences of view which were already arising among them about the Lord's Supper. This had already long been the subject of fierce controversy between

[1] See page 74.

[2] The chief design of this decree evidently was to protect Catholics from persecution by Protestants. At this time Mohammedan Turkey allowed fuller religious liberty than Christian Europe, and more than once early Antitrinitarians were obliged to go there for refuge. (Cf. page 68.)

Lutherans and Calvinists elsewhere, the Lutherans holding that the body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and wine, while the Swiss reformers held that these are only symbols. Calvin's doctrine had come into Hungary in 1550, and was rapidly infecting the Lutheran Protestants there, and Calvinistic churches were now being formed. In the end most of the Magyars and Szeklers became Calvinists, while the Saxons remained Lutherans; but the separation was preceded by some years of angry dispute. It is in one of the earliest of these discussions that we first hear, in 1556, of one Francis David (of whom we shall soon hear a great deal as the hero of this part of our story) taking part on the Lutheran side; and he was for some time the leader of the opposition to Calvinism among the Hungarian Protestants. The king became concerned lest the violent quarrels which were distracting the Church should also disturb the peace of the state, and he had synods called to see whether harmony could not be restored; but nothing was accomplished. The Diet of Torda therefore in 1563 renewed and confirmed its earlier decree of toleration, ordering "that each may embrace the religion that he prefers, without any compulsion, and may be free to support preachers of his own faith, and in the use of the sacraments, and that neither party must do injury or violence to the other." Seeing that all other efforts proved vain, the king at length settled the matter at the synod of Nagy Enyed the next year, by ordering the parties to separate into two distinct churches, each with its own superintendent or bishop. Transylvania thus took another step toward religious toleration, having now three recognized churches, the Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed.

While these things were going on, seeds of Unitarianism were also beginning to sprout. It might almost be said

that the Hungarians had been predisposed to that doctrine by their history. As we have already seen, Arian Christianity flourished here under the Gothic occupation. In 351 also Photinus, Bishop of Sirmium (Mitrovicz) on the Save, was condemned as a heretic and banished for holding that Christ's nature was essentially human. His heresy long survived him in those parts, and Unitarians have often been called Photinians. Arianism existed more or less widely spread as late as the formal conversion of the Hungarians to orthodox Christianity in 1002; and even after that it fused with the faith of the Albigenses and Waldenses until the fifteenth century, and was widely spread among the people. Early in the Reformation period Anabaptists had also been here and prepared the way, and the writings of Servetus had been read and his doctrines had gained scattered followers, so that the first Protestant synod in Hungary had found it necessary as early as 1545 to condemn opponents of the Trinity. The first prophet of Unitarianism in Hungary was one Thomas Aran, who in 1558 wrote a clear and bold book denying the Trinity, and in 1561 began to preach his doctrine at Debreczen, the very Geneva of Hungarian Calvinism. The Calvinist preacher there, Peter Melius, was aroused like a Hungarian Calvin to put down the heresy. A public discussion was arranged, and the question was debated for four days; when such pressure was put upon Aran by the civil power that he confessed defeat and retracted, though he later professed Unitarianism again in Transylvania. His teachings, however, were discussed in various synods, and had spread so far that Melius felt obliged to publish a book against them. Not a few churches adopted them, both in the northern counties where he had taught and in the great plain of Lower Hungary.

It was in Transylvania, however, that Unitarianism had its most important influence. The real forerunner of Unitarianism here was Stancaro. He had come to Transylvania in 1553, and for five years he persistently advocated the same views of the work of Christ which he spread a little later in Poland.[1] He was bitterly opposed, by David and others, and at length was expelled and went to Poland, where we have already noted his career. Although he did not himself deny the Trinity or the deity of Christ, the result of his teaching was in both countries the same, to pave the way for others to deny them. Unitarian doctrines were little likely, however, to make much headway against orthodox opposition unless they could have the backing and leadership of some person of considerable influence. Such a leader now came upon the scene in the person of Biandrata, who may be credited with successfully introducing Unitarianism into Transylvania. We have already met him in Switzerland, and in Poland.[2] In 1554, when he was court physician to Queen Bona of Poland, she had sent him to Transylvania to attend her daughter, the young Queen Isabella, with her little son, the young Prince John Sigismund; and he had then lived at the Transylvanian court for eight years. It was but natural, therefore, that when the young king lay dangerously ill in 1563 he should send for the able physician of his boyhood. Biandrata was glad enough to escape from a position in Poland which Calvin's efforts against him had made disagreeable and might make dangerous, and to accept the high post of court physician to the King of Transylvania.[3]

Until his sixteenth year John Sigismund's education had

[1] See page 126.
[2] See pages 104, 105, 129, 132.
[3] See page 132.

been under Catholic influences, but he had now for several years supported the Reformation as a Lutheran. He had already driven out the priests and monks from the land; and now that he was hard beset by foes in war and by conspiracies which his enemies had stirred up against him at home, he sought consolation in religion, and interested himself seriously in the further reform of it. He was now twenty-three, and the Italian officer who commanded his body guard wrote home to his sovereign, the Grand-Duke Cosimo de' Medici, giving a most interesting and admiring sketch, which is still extant. Though of slight physique, he says, and not strong of health, the king was skillful in all manly sports. He was highly intelligent, and spoke eight languages; of refined tastes and manners, and with a charming personality; brave, industrious, generous, and frank, distinguished for his personal virtues, and devoted to religion. His residence was at Gyulafehervar,[1] which thus becomes an important place in our history.

Biandrata, on the other hand, was now in the prime of life, and by his adventurous history, his handsome appearance, his courtly manners, and his eloquence he made a marked impression upon the king and at court, where he soon became the leading figure. Within a year he had won the confidence of the king to such a degree as to be made his private counsellor, and was presently rewarded by the handsome gift of three villages, and given the privileges of a noble; though just because of his great influence with the king he was feared, rather than popular, at court. He lost none of his interest in the reform of theology, but still kept in communication with the brethren in Poland; and

[1] Also called Alba Julia, or Weissenburg; later known as Karolyfehervar, or Karlsburg. Hungarian proper names are a study in themselves!

finding the king also deeply interested in religion he eagerly seconded and guided his impulses for further reformation, proceeding cautiously, and not at first disclosing how far he had himself gone. They must have talked much of theology from the first, for within a few months, when the controversy over the Lord's Supper [1] was at its critical stage in 1564, the king sent 'his most excellent Giorgio Biandrata, his physician, an eminent man, learned and uncommonly well versed in the Scriptures,' to the general synod at Nagy Enyed at which the Calvinists were finally separated from the Lutherans, with full power and authority to take part in the discussion and if possible settle the controversy. Biandrata here of course took the side of progress and supported the Calvinists, and here too he discovered in David, who was the leader on the Calvinist side of the debate, a man admirably suited to promote in Transylvania the further reform in which he had himself taken a part in Poland. As David was soon to become the great leader of Unitarianism in Transylvania, its hero, martyr, and idol, we must here turn aside from our narrative to see who and what he was.

[1] See page 214.

CHAPTER XXII

FRANCIS DAVID AND THE RISE OF UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA, 1564–1569

Francis David[1] was born at Kolozsvar (Klausenburg), the capital of Transylvania, about 1510, and was thus a close contemporary of Calvin and Servetus, and a few years older than Biandrata. He was the son of a shoemaker, and perhaps a Saxon, though he spoke and wrote both German and Hungarian, as well as Latin, with perfect fluency. He was doubtless first educated at the school of the Franciscan monks at Kolozsvar, and later went to the cathedral school at Gyulafehervar, where he showed himself a brilliant student, and made influential acquaintances. After being in the service of the church here for a time, he was sent by a wealthy friend to the University of Wittenberg, where many Catholic students still went in spite of Luther's heresy centering there. He may also have studied at Padua. After two or three years he returned home in 1551 an accomplished scholar and became rector of a Catholic school at Besztercze for two years, and was then for two years more parish priest of a large village in the same county. Many of the Catholic clergy of the vicinity were then accepting the doctrines of the Reformation. David joined them, gave up his priesthood, and became a Lutheran. His reputation was already such that three of the most

[1] The Latin form, Franciscus Davidis, is often found. The name in Hungarian is David Ferencz.

important Protestant churches in the country called him to their service. He accepted the call to his old home at Kolozsvar, where he spent the remaining twenty-four years of his life, in a position of the greatest influence, and idolized by his people.

David's rise was now rapid. He seems to have been made rector of the Lutheran school in 1555, and chief minister of the largest church the following year; while by 1557, having already won a great reputation by his brilliant debates against Stancaro and the Calvinists,[1] and thus come to be recognized as the leader of the Reformation in Transylvania, he was bishop (or superintendent) of the Hungarian Lutherans. He was, however, by nature, of an open mind, and after debating against the Calvinist view of the Lord's Supper for several years, he was at length won over to it by its chief defender, Melius, and accordingly resigned his office of bishop in 1559. Though the Lutherans expelled him from their synod in 1560, he still kept his pastorate, and tried to the very end to prevent a split in the church. He took an active part in the debates that occupied every synod, and now came to be regarded the leader of the Calvinists as he had formerly been that of the Lutherans. His persuasive eloquence won the king and many of the magnates to the new view, and when the two churches were separated in 1564 it was but natural that Biandrata should have used his powerful influence to have another removed and David appointed in his stead, first as court preacher, and then as bishop—this second time as bishop of the new Reformed Church in Transylvania.

David was now at the very summit of his powers, the most eloquent and famous preacher and the ablest public debater in Transylvania; so well versed in Scripture that he seemed

[1] See pages 215, 217.

to have the whole Bible at his tongue's end, while in debating a point of doctrine he would quote texts and compare passages with a readiness that often put his opponents to confusion. Having David at court, Biandrata now became intimate with him, and confided to him his hopes of a further reformation of the doctrines of the Church. Biandrata, taught by his past experiences in Italy, Switzerland, and Poland, was cautious and moved slowly. David was bold and fearless. In that very year, in the king's presence at the Diet of Segesvar, he openly spoke against the Trinity; and the king, instead of objecting, only smiled. In 1566 David found one of the professors in the Kolozsvar school teaching the old doctrine about the Trinity, and ventured to correct him. The teacher, angered, publicly charged David with heresy. David had him removed, and then began carefully and systematically to preach the unity of God from his Kolozsvar pulpit. The teacher went to Hungary and joined Melius who, with the spirit of a new Athanasius, made himself the champion of orthodoxy, and from Calvin and Beza brought the king warnings against Biandrata, and asked that a synod be called to debate the matter.

Prolonged and heated controversy followed, and from now on for nearly five years there were almost every month debates over the doctrine of the Trinity at synod, Diet, or public debate. Many of these discussions took the shape of formal disputations, in which each side appointed its best debaters to present and defend carefully framed theses and antitheses, while stenographic reports were taken by the secretaries. At several of these the king himself presided and occasionally took part, while the clergy and the nobles from far and near would be present in large numbers. The records would then be published on a press which the

king had already provided for Biandrata and David to use in their work of reformation, and these became valuable documents for propaganda throughout the whole country; for people at that time were as keenly interested in these themes as they can now be in the most burning political questions.

Public discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity began in Transylvania at the national synod held at Gyulafehervar, and thence adjourned to Torda, early in 1566. The ministers present, under the leadership of Biandrata and David, after accepting the Apostles' Creed, adopted a statement of their belief on the Trinity which gave it a Unitarian interpretation, and rejected the Athanasian doctrine as untenable. At another synod a few weeks later they expressed their belief more fully and carefully, and soon afterwards they published a catechism. Their purpose, like that of Servetus and the Polish Brethren, seems to have been simply to restore the doctrine of the New Testament and the primitive Church, as a basis on which all Christians might unite.

Melius, who had by now become bishop of the Reformed Church in Hungary, had thus far been disputing on hostile territory, where the liberals were in the majority; the next year he therefore called a synod at Debreczen in his own district, and got some strongly orthodox propositions adopted, while the Helvetic Confession just adopted in Switzerland as a bar to further heresy there [1] was signed by his ministers. In Transylvania meanwhile the press was busy on the other side, especially with a book *On the True and the False Knowledge of the One God*, which sought, among other things, to ridicule the absurdities of the doctrine of the Trinity by means of coarse pictures, and there-

[1] See page 110.

fore greatly angered the orthodox, while it made an indelible impression upon the minds of the common people. In his dedication of this book to the king, David makes a plea for toleration which is far in advance of his age: "There is no greater piece of folly than to try to exercise power over conscience and soul, both of which are subject only to their Creator." This spirit found sympathy with the king, and soon afterwards, at a Diet at Torda in January, 1568, where David made an eloquent plea for religious toleration, the decrees of 1557 and 1563 [1] were renewed and strengthened. The king decreed "that preachers shall be allowed to preach the Gospel everywhere, each according to his own understanding of it. If the community wish to accept such preaching, well and good; if not, they shall not be compelled, but shall be allowed to keep the preachers they prefer. No one shall be made to suffer on account of his religion, since faith is the gift of God." This is the Magna Charta of religion in Transylvania, and it deserves to be remembered as a golden date in Unitarian history, for it saved the Unitarian faith from being crushed out there as it was in other lands. In the generation in which it was passed, the Inquisition was doing its worst to crush Protestantism in Spain and Italy, Alva was putting Protestants to death by the thousands in the Netherlands, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew with its 20,000 or 30,000 victims in France was yet four years in the future; while deniers of the Trinity were still to be burned alive in England for more than forty years. It long stood as the most advanced step in toleration yet taken in Europe; and the king who passed this enlightened law was but twenty-eight years old.

Melius, displeased with the way things were running, now

[1] See pages 214, 215.

sought to stem the tide by inviting the Transylvanian ministers to a joint debate at Debreczen in Hungary, where everything was strongly orthodox; but as this was out of the jurisdiction of King John, so that they could not enjoy the protection of his tolerant laws, and as a few weeks before an antitrinitarian minister had been seized in that vicinity and imprisoned without trial, Biandrata suspected a plot, and would not let the invitation be accepted. Instead, the king, wishing to see the debated questions settled, and to quiet the disturbances that were arising out of them, summoned a general synod of the ministers of both Hungary and Transylvania to meet in his own palace at Gyulafehervar, to hear a formal debate on the subject. Five debaters, led by Biandrata and David, represented the Unitarian side, while on the side of the Calvinists were six speakers, headed by their bishop, Melius. It was the greatest debate in the whole history of Unitarianism. It took place at Gyualafehervar in the great hall of the palace before the king, the whole court, and a great throng of ministers and nobles, who occasionally enlivened the proceedings by their questions or comments. The debate began on March 8, 1568, at five o'clock in the morning, with solemn prayers on each side; it was conducted in Latin, and lasted ten full days. Melius appealed to the authority of the Bible, the creeds, the Fathers, and the orthodox theologians; David, to the Bible alone. The discussion began with some heat, which did not much cool off as it went on. On the ninth day the Calvinists asked to be excused from listening further. The king intimated that this would be confessing defeat, and they remained; but as nothing was being accomplished to bring the parties to agree (how could it ever have been really expected?) the king ended the debate the

next day, recommending that the ministers give themselves to prayer, seek harmony, and refrain from mutual abuse as unbecoming in them.

The debate was generally regarded as a complete victory for the Unitarians, whose side the king evidently favored; but the Calvinist historian's comment is that it ended without any profit to the Church of Christ, which was perhaps his way of stating the same thing. In the course of the debate Biandrata showed himself a poor debater, and he did not enter public discussion again; but David, who opened and closed the debate, and was ready with a convincing answer to every question or objection, covered himself with glory. He now returned home to Kolozsvar. The news of his triumph had preceded him. The streets were crowded to receive him. Without waiting for him to get to the church, the people made him mount a large boulder at a street corner (it is still preserved by the Unitarians of Kolozsvar as a sacred relic) and speak to them of his victorious new doctrine. They received his word with the greatest enthusiasm, and after a time they took him on their shoulders and carried him to the great church in the square, where he went on with his sermon. His eloquence was so persuasive that on that day, so the tradition runs, the whole population of Kolozsvar accepted the Unitarian faith.[1] Not quite the whole, however; for the Lutheran Saxons of Kolozsvar were so disgusted with this proceeding that they left the city forthwith, and had it removed from the number of their seven fortified towns which had for centuries enjoyed special privileges granted to the Saxons.[2] From now on for many years Kolozsvar was practically a

[1] By a confusion of dates between the two debates at Gyulafehervar (see page 223), this event is often wrongly placed in 1566 instead of 1568.

[2] See page 212 n.

Unitarian city, all its churches and schools were Unitarian, and all the members of the city Council and the higher officials were Unitarians. In this year, 1568, David for the third time became bishop, this time of the Unitarian churches.

Being thus defeated in Transylvania, the Calvinists now appealed to the judgment of the professors in the German universities, who were considered the highest authorities in Protestant Europe on questions of theology. Of course the replies were in their favor, for all Germany was orthodox; and several of the professors wrote books against David and Biandrata, and tried to stir up feeling against them. They also began somewhat to rally their forces in Transylvania; while in Hungary, all through the year 1568, they kept holding synods in different districts, confirming the orthodox doctrine and condemning the Antitrinitarians. Disregarding the king's decree of tolerance, they persecuted and drove out ministers holding Unitarian views, if they would not deny their faith, and forbade them to speak in their own defense, lest they thus make more converts to their views.

Many, however, wished that a discussion might be held in the Hungarian language, which they could all understand. David therefore determined to carry the war into the enemy's country, and with the king's sanction called another synod to meet at Nagyvarad (Grosswardein) October 10, 1569. The orthodox clergy denied his right to summon them to a synod, having in Melius a bishop of their own, and at first were unwilling to attend, though at length they yielded. The conditions of the debate were carefully drawn, and officers appointed as usual. David presented a statement of his faith and of the propositions he stood ready to defend. His opponents offered counter-arguments, and presented

propositions of their own, signed by sixty ministers. Gaspar Bekes presided, the most powerful magnate in the kingdom, and the king's most intimate councillor. The king and his court were present with many generals and magnates, and the leading clergy from both Transylvania and Hungary; and he himself frequently took part in the discussion. The attendance was larger than even at Gyulafehervar. There were nine disputants on each side, though the debate was mainly between David and Melius, and was carried on with the greatest intensity. On one occasion Melius attacked David with such violence that the king himself rebuked him, and suggested that if the orthodox ministers did not believe in freedom of conscience they had better remove to some other country. "We wish that in our dominions," said he, "there be freedom of conscience; for we know that faith is the gift of God, and that one's conscience can not be forced." David pleaded eloquently for religious liberty. After six days the king saw that nothing further could be gained, and having charged the orthodox with evading the real issue he closed the debate. He, Bekes, the court, and the majority of the company were won to David's views, and henceforth the king clearly accepted the Unitarian faith. The orthodox minority contented themselves with drawing up and signing a confession of faith of their own, condemning David and his views. This was the decisive debate in the controversy over the Trinity, and it clinched the victory won at Gyulafehervar two years before.

CHAPTER XXIII

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA UNTIL THE DEATH OF FRANCIS DAVID, 1569–1579

The churches accepting David's views had now definitely separated from those of the orthodox faith, although it does not appear precisely when or precisely how the division was finally effected. They had thus far no distinctive name of their own. For a time the ministers signed themselves "ministers of the Evangelical profession"; in laws of 1576 they are mentioned as "those holding the religion of Francis David"; and as late as 1577 a vote of the Diet of Torda refers to them merely as "of the other religion"; while since the center of their power was at Kolozsvar, the churches and their bishop were also long spoken of as "of the Kolozsvar Confession." There is some reason to think that in the debate between David and Melius the name Unitarian was already applied to the party of David, though it is not found in records until 1600, and it did not become the authorized designation of the Church until 1638. The guess of a Calvinist historian writing in the middle of the eighteenth century, that the name was derived from a *union* between the four religions of Transylvania in 1568, though it has often been quoted as authentic, must be dismissed as incorrect. The name is undoubtedly derived from Unitarians' belief in the *unity* of God, as the name Trinitarian was supposed to be derived from belief in the Trinity. Catholic writers of the period, however, commonly called

the Unitarians Trinitarians (as Servetus had called Calvin), meaning by that nearly the same as tritheists. The name Unitarian, which thus originated in Transylvania, was at length taken up by the later Socinians, and thence passed to England and America.

We are now at the golden age of Unitarianism in Transylvania, when the new faith rapidly spread in all directions, as rings spread on the water. The king had openly given it his adherence, and so of course the court followed his example to make doubly sure of enjoying his favor. At one time seven of his councillors became Unitarians; generals, judges, and many of the higher officials followed, until there remained hardly a family of importance that had not accepted the new faith. Its strength was especially in the larger towns and in the villages of Szeklerland; while able professors whom David had secured, some of them distinguished refugees from persecution in other countries, taught it in thirteen higher schools or colleges, chief of which was the college founded by the king at Kolozsvar, and occupying the buildings of an abandoned Dominican monastery. The press, too, was unceasingly active in the cause, and in the one year 1568 no fewer than twelve works, eight of them by David himself, were published in Latin for scholars, or in Hungarian for the common people. As in Poland,[1] so here, when a noble became Unitarian, the churches on his estates were likely to be placed under ministers of his faith, and thus became Unitarian also. Before David died there were far over three hundred Unitarian churches in Transylvania and the neighboring counties of Hungary; and before the end of the century some four hundred and twenty-five, beside some

[1] See page 128 n.

sixty more in lower Hungary. This considerably exceeded the number in Poland.

There was one misgiving to trouble David's mind. So long as the king lived, they were sure of his protection and sympathy; but he was not in strong health—suppose he should die? To be sure, freedom of worship and preaching had been decreed, and persecution on account of religion had been forbidden; but the Unitarian Church had no such legal standing as the other churches had. David urged this matter upon the attention of the king, and he was not slow to respond. At the Diet of Maros Vasarhely held early in 1571, after ample discussion, the king granted the people and church of Kolozsvar certain privileges which had been impaired by the withdrawal of the Saxons; and, what was of more importance, he established perfect equality of the four chief religions, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and Unitarian. These were henceforth known as the four "received religions": that is, while other religions might be merely tolerated, these were legally recognized and protected, and their members had the right to hold high public office. This action crowned the broad policy of King John Sigismund with regard to religious matters. All rulers of Transylvania were required henceforth to take oath at coronation to preserve the equal rights secured by this decree, and it has ever since been the most prized and the first mentioned of all the rights the constitution grants. It is worth more than passing notice that at the only time in history when there has been a Unitarian king on the throne, and a Unitarian government in power, they used their power not to oppress other forms of religion, nor to secure exceptional privileges for their own, but to insist upon equal rights and privileges for all.

Less than two months after this act the king died. The day after the Diet rose, while he was about to go to one of his castles for a rest, he was seriously injured by a runaway accident. His health was already frail, complications set in, and he passed away at Gyulafehervar March 15, 1571, not yet thirty-one years old. He was deeply mourned, for, apart from animosities arising out of religion, he had been popular with his subjects for his qualities of mind and heart and for his personal character, and was known for his justice and mercy. During his whole reign he had had to contend with enemies who coveted his throne and land, and who were constantly inciting troubles within his kingdom. Nine times his life had been attempted. He died childless, for though he would gladly have married, his enemies repeatedly prevented such an alliance, urging against him that he was an abandoned heretic, but really desiring to see his line become extinct, that they might obtain his crown. Though always in delicate health he more than once showed himself an able general and a resourceful statesman; and realizing that Transylvania would fare best if separate from Hungary, he followed a policy which laid the foundation for a century of independent national life for his country. He fostered science and art, was the friend of scholars and the patron of education, doing much to found and support schools and colleges; but above all else he was interested in religion, and no name among modern rulers deserves to stand higher than his for his pioneer work in the cause of equal freedom to different religions. Let him be remembered by us in honor as the one Unitarian king.

While Unitarianism was thus rapidly gaining ground in Transylvania, a more modest growth was also at the same time taking place in Hungary proper. Though his control

of them was disputed, King John Sigismund was supposed to rule over ten or twelve of the Hungarian counties north and west of Transylvania; and although the Calvinists were strongly in the majority there, Unitarians were in the less danger of being persecuted in those parts. The chief apostle of the faith in the upper counties was Lukas Egri, minister of the church at Ungvar, and one of the most learned ministers in the country. He won so many converts to his views that the synod was forced to take notice of it in 1566, when he presented a statement of belief that was regarded as unsound as to the Trinity, though no action was then taken. Two years later the orthodox called another synod at Kassa, under the auspices of the Catholic General Schwendi who was in command there. Egri was summoned to attend, and presented twenty-seven theses, which were debated. He was condemned as heretical; and as he refused to retract and sign an orthodox confession, the general threw him into prison without further trial,[1] and there he lay for five long years, nor was he released until three years after he had recanted. The spread of Unitarianism in Hungary was also much furthered by the last great controversy between David and Melius at Nagyvarad in 1569.[2] Soon after that, Stephen Balasz (Basilius) succeeded in converting a church of 3,000 members at Nagyvarad to the Unitarian faith, and this church, with its fine school attached, lasted far on into the next century. A little later Unitarianism was preached even at Debreczen, as well as at numerous other places east of the Tisza, and even as far west as Esztergom (Gran), and Melius had to exert himself to the utmost to prevent its spread in other centers in Hungary.

1 See page 225.
2 See page 227.

In Lower Hungary the Unitarian faith spread much faster yet. That district was then under the rule of the Sultan, who allowed much greater religious freedom than did either Catholics or orthodox Protestants. After his successful work at Nagyvarad, Balasz proved a most effective missionary in that region, spreading his faith from city to city south and west. He soon called two ministers from Transylvania to assist him, and others followed them. They held the usual public debates, and their progress through the country was a triumphal procession. They came at length to have in the two counties of Temes and Baranya alone more than sixty churches, many of them with schools, of which the chief were at Temesvar, the seat of the Turkish government, and at the old university city of Pecs (Fünfkirchen), which also had a famous school and became an active missionary center for the region. Government officials joined the movement and assisted it with their wealth; and after King John's death, the press which he had given the Unitarians at Gyulafehervar was brought here, and through the circulation of Unitarian books many of the Calvinist ministers of the county were converted. After a few years these churches became separated from those in Transylvania, and had their own "Bishop of Lower Hungary," Paul Karadi, whose seat was at Temesvar.

Not all went smoothly, however. A tragic discussion was held in 1574, in which the Calvinist preacher Vörösmarti debated against the Unitarians Lukas Tolnai and George Alvinczi. The Calvinists won the debate, and their bishop thereupon induced the local government to condemn their opponents to death. Tolnai escaped to Pecs, where he was protected; but Alvinczi was hanged. A bold move was then made. A wealthy Unitarian living in the vicinity, despite the fact that a complainant had been beheaded some years

before, complained of the matter to the Turkish Pasha at Buda, and demanded as a satisfaction for the death of Alvinczi that the Calvinistic bishop also be put to death. The bishop was ordered to appear. He maintained that he had acted within the law. A disputation was ordered, with three debaters on each side, and it took place before a great crowd representing Catholics, Greeks, Reformed, Unitarians, Jews, and Turks. The Pasha decided at the end that the execution of Alvinczi had been inhuman, and condemned the three Calvinists to death as murderers. The orthodox were in a panic at the prospect of having to take some of their own medicine, and interceded for the lives of the three. The Unitarians supported their plea, saying they did not wish revenge. After lying in prison for some time in suspense, the three were released upon payment of a large ransom, and a large further annual tribute was levied on the whole province. This was both more satisfactory to the Calvinists and more profitable to the Pasha than an execution would have been. The Calvinists did not venture to repeat the offense. Later discussions were milder in their tone, and at a famous one at Pecs in 1588 between the Unitarian missionary Valaszuti and the Calvinist scholar Skaricza, the Unitarian side was victorious.

To return to Transylvania. The death of King John Sigismund was the beginning of sorrows for the Unitarians. They had hoped that his successor might be Gaspar Bekes,[1] who was the king's own choice, and had been his high chamberlain and closest adviser; for he would carry out the political policies that John had at heart, and he was also a Unitarian; but unfortunately he was absent on a political mission when the king died. His enemies intrigued against him in his absence, and his rival's brother was in command

[1] See page 228.

of the army; so that, although he returned home as soon as possible, and mustered all his forces at the Diet following, the nobles chose one who was like themselves a Magyar, though a Catholic, and one of the very few magnates who had remained in that faith.

Upon receiving the crown the new prince, Stephen Bathori, was required to take oath to protect the four received religions in all their rights; and he was, for his time, a fair and just ruler, who declared that it was a grievous crime for one to try to rule the conscience of another. Although unfriendly to the Reformation, he promoted Calvinists and Lutherans to public office without prejudice; but he set his face against Unitarianism, and determined by all fair means to check its spread. Moreover, as his rival Bekes had been an eminent Unitarian leader, and as most of his followers had been of that faith, and as they had raised an insurrection, refusing to acknowledge Stephen's authority, the whole Unitarian community of course fell under suspicion of being not only heretical but also disloyal. He therefore at once began an anti-Unitarian movement, which was of course eagerly fostered by the Lutherans and Calvinists. The king removed all Unitarians from court and from high public office, and he appointed another court preacher in place of David. Reviving an old law, he made it impossible for them to print their books without his leave, and he thus cut off one of the chief means they had used to spread their faith. The Unitarian printer was exiled, and took his press to Pecs in Hungary.[1]

Another line of attack was upon the teaching of the Unitarians. The Diet decreed in 1572 and 1573 that any "innovators," introducing further reforms or changes in religion, should be excommunicated and banished, or even im-

[1] See page 234.

prisoned or put to death for blasphemy, at the discretion of the prince, and we shall soon see to what this led. In 1574 David's life and teaching were investigated at the synod of Nagy Enyed in order if possible to discover some scandal that might humiliate him and destroy his influence. Each year things went from bad to worse. In 1575 Bekes was utterly defeated, many of his followers were killed in battle, over two score of the Unitarian magnates were executed as rebels, more were mutilated, and a large number of the nobles were degraded from their rank and had their property confiscated; his party (mostly Szeklers) was almost exterminated.[1] With the Unitarian cause so shattered, the prince now attempted to proselyte those that were left, though with little success.

All this time Biandrata had managed to retain his position as court physician, and continued to be high in the counsels of the prince. When the throne of Poland fell vacant in 1574, and Stephen became a candidate for it, he sent Biandrata thither in his interest, and it was largely through his physician's efforts that Stephen received the election in the following year.[2] But for him, perhaps the Unitarians might have fared far worse than they did; and it is significant that soon afterwards, at the Diet of 1576, the office of the Unitarian bishop was given legal recognition. Stephen left the government of Transylvania to his brother Christopher as regent, who proved less tolerant than he, and more determined to restore the Catholic Church; but despite objections from Catholic quarters he still retained Biandrata in his service and in his place at court. In the year

[1] Bekes now fled the country, but afterwards came again into favor with Stephen when the latter was King of Poland, and did him valuable service as a general against the Russians. He died in Lithuania eight days before David.

[2] See page 166.

after Christopher took control, further measures were taken to restrict the activity of the Unitarians. The Diet ordered that their bishop be forbidden to visit their churches and to hold synods except at Kolozsvar and Torda, where they were most numerous. Elsewhere the oversight of the churches was assigned to the Reformed superintendent, with leave to convert them to Calvinism if he could. In Szeklerland this rule was in force for more than a century, much to the detriment of the Unitarian cause, as we shall see. Even the Reformed were forbidden to make other proselytes.

Every effort was thus made to give the Catholics a chance to win the country back to their own faith, and in 1579 the prince appealed to the Jesuits to come and assist in restoring the influence of their church, as they had been asked to do in Poland fifteen years before.[1] They came with alacrity, and with his support at once set up schools at Nagyvarad and Kolozsvar; while at Gyulafehervar, where Christopher gave them the Unitarian school, he at once put the young Prince Sigismund under their instruction. This of course now at once became the fashionable school, where the sons of the magnates might be educated along with their future prince. Jesuit influence spread rapidly, both with the prince and among the people—so rapidly, in fact, and with so much interference in policies of state, that in 1588 the nobles in the Diet unanimously voted to have them expelled from the land, lest through their machinations Transylvania be soon brought under the rule of Catholic Austria, which was indeed the Jesuit design. They managed to get back again more than once, but the feeling against them was so strong and so general that they were never allowed to stay long enough to gain control of things, as they did

[1] See page 165.

in Poland. It is due to this fact as much as to any other that Unitarianism was not overthrown also in Transylvania.

While the Unitarians had received staggering blows in the death of King John, the overthrow of the party of Bekes, and the succession of laws which the Diet had passed to limit their growth, yet their internal life went on much as before. Especially in their thought, which they had not caused to set like plaster by adopting a binding creed, they kept on advancing. It was this very growth in their thought that brought about their next great trouble. Although they no longer believed that Christ was equal with God, they had inherited from their past the habit of praying to him.[1] There were some of their leading thinkers, however, able scholars like Sommer and Palæologus, rectors of the Kolozsvar school, and others, who believed that this practice had never been taught in Scripture nor commanded by Christ himself, and who therefore held that it ought to be given up. This view had already been put forth about the time of King John's death, and had then been discussed by the Unitarians, Biandrata included, without meeting serious objection; and it had evidently spread widely among them without arousing much of a stir. To the more orthodox, however, this seemed like giving up Christianity altogether and going back to Judaism; and when the Jesuits came into the land in 1579, and found David supporting this view, this seemed to them the most vulnerable point in

[1] The Socinians held that this was the very heart of their religion, and felt that giving it up would be a more pernicious error than believing in the Trinity. The Racovian Catechism taught that those who believe otherwise are not Christians (p. 160); though a distinction was drawn by some between adoring the supreme God and invoking Christ's aid as our mediator with him. Budny in Lithuania (page 139), taught by Palæologus, opposed this view, and was hence expelled from the Church.

the Unitarian armor, and they therefore began urging that David be prosecuted for teaching such blasphemy. It is they that were really at the bottom of what followed.

David, whose mind was always ready for progress, had adopted this view by 1572, though for several years he had happened to say little or nothing upon it. At this unfortunate time, however, just as the Catholics were becoming aggressive, and the Diet in 1577 had renewed the law against further "innovations," he began to preach boldly. At the Unitarian synod at Torda in 1578, with 322 clergy present, he had taken occasion to speak against the worship of Christ, and infant baptism had also been abolished as unscriptural. David went on in public addresses and private discussions to further reformation of doctrine; and though the Diet the next month uttered yet another warning against "innovations," he ignored the warning, and at the autumn synod continued the doctrinal discussions as before. Biandrata at court saw full well what the Jesuits were waiting for, and that the prince under their pressure was growing impatient; and he realized that there was great danger lest all Unitarians be banished from the country. He urged David to keep quiet, and when David replied that this would be hypocrisy, Biandrata next suggested to him that in order to save the whole cause from ruin it might be well to have two or three of the ministers who were most zealous in spreading this new teaching tried for heresy. It might have been a politic move to make, but David indignantly rejected a proposal so dishonorable.

Biandrata now tried another tack. He had heard of Faustus Socinus and his famous debate at Basel early that year on Christ the Savior,[1] and he sent for him to come and try to bring David around by arguments out of the

[1] See page 149.

Bible. Socinus came, by way of Poland, bearing recommendations from the Polish churches; and from autumn to spring he lodged and boarded at David's house, at Biandrata's expense, conducting a running discussion with him on the subject of the worship of Christ. Many of the ministers came in and took part in the debate. Socinus warned David that such views would lead men back to Moses and Judaism; but David remained of the same opinion still. Then Biandrata had David's income from the church cut down; whereat David bitterly protested, comparing this persecution of himself to Calvin's persecution of Servetus. Biandrata replied in anger that if David did not abandon the offensive doctrine he should be accused and tried at the next Diet for the crime of innovation. So it was agreed between them that the matter be referred to a committee of the ministers, who in their turn put it over until a general synod. Biandrata also proposed that all the arguments on both sides be put in writing and submitted to the Polish churches for their judgment. It was agreed that this be done, and that meantime David should preserve silence on the subject. He and Socinus both prepared statements of their views, which were shown to the prince and then sent to Poland. Without waiting for the answer, however, David called another synod at Torda, despite Biandrata's opposition. Upon this Biandrata, thinking David incorrigible and defiant, called fifty of the ministers together, told them that David's case was soon to come up at the Diet, gave them a statement of David's views which seriously misrepresented him, and covertly suggested to them how they had better vote if they did not wish to be removed from office and banished. At the same time he wrote Socinus to tell David that whereas he had thus far defended him with the prince, he should now take side

against him. The prince then ordered the Kolozsvar Council to have David removed from his pastorate and kept under guard in his own house, and secluded from visitors. David now suspected Socinus of treachery and ordered him from his house. All this time David was ill; but the next day, being Sunday, he roused himself and preached in the two churches at Kolozsvar, telling his people of what was impending, eloquently defending the Unitarian doctrine, and declaring the worship of Christ to be just the same as invoking the Virgin Mary or the saints. It was the last sermon he ever preached. "Whatever the world may say," he concluded, "it must some time become clear that God is but one."

The prince was naturally very angry at this, although the Kolozsvar council did their utmost to appease him, and so did many of the nobles; but he insisted that David be arrested. Socinus, having recovered from an illness, went to Poland, where we have already followed his later career.[1] Biandrata's feeling toward David had now deepened into bitter personal animosity. He had him kept under the strictest guard, and would not allow anything done to relieve David's physical sufferings, nor permit even his family to go to him, except rarely. Though too weak to stand, David was at length taken in a wagon to Gyulafehervar and brought into court before the prince. The question was whether his teaching against the worship of Christ was "innovation" or not. Much evidence was brought to show that these views, instead of being new, had long been current among the Unitarians, and once assented to by even Biandrata himself. After the case had been submitted, David and his friends were required to withdraw. A score or more of the Unitarian ministers, remembering Bian-

[1] See Chapter xvii.

drata's threat, and also the orthodox ministers, swore that they had never shared these views. Only one was bold enough to declare that these things had been discussed at Nagyvarad without creating any scandal there. The nobles, however, declared that they agreed with David; while on the other hand the Jesuits last of all pronounced his teachings damnable blasphemy. David was again brought into court. The complainants asked mercy for him, but the orthodox ministers from Hungary demanded his life. The prince pronounced him guilty, and sentenced him to imprisonment in the castle at Deva. Further appeals in his behalf were in vain. The judgment of the Polish churches had not been waited for, but when it did come it was unfavorable to David's teachings. He himself did not long survive, but died in his prison November 15, 1579. His enemies afterwards circulated terrible legends about his last days; but it is probable that he died of the illness from which he had long been suffering.

Francis David deserves to stand along with Servetus as one of the two greatest martyrs in Unitarian history. He was an untiring student of Scripture, and in his efforts to carry the reformation of Christianity through consistently he never shrank from taking the next step. This made him seem to his opponents to be utterly unstable, for their ideal was that one's religious views once formed should never be changed; but his changes were simply phases of a steady movement in one consistent direction, and he was not a man to believe a thing in his heart but keep silent about it when in his pulpit. Neither bribes nor threats could move him from faithfulness to the truth as he saw it; and his example of unswerving fidelity to his faith, even unto death, has continued to inspire his followers in Transylvania during three hundred and fifty years, of which few

have been free from some sort of religious persecution. In his beliefs and teachings he was far in advance of Socinus, and of his own time; and he was the only one of the earlier Unitarian leaders in any country who would feel spiritually much at home among Unitarians of the twentieth century. While this is now his greatest praise, it then brought the greatest danger to his cause, and death to himself.

As for Biandrata's part in this tragedy, it is not easy to be sure whether one is fair and just to him. Was he moved to it by envy and jealousy that the reformation which he had introduced into the Reformed religion should so soon and so fully have passed from his influence under that of a man whom he had himself discovered and brought forward? Was it a sense of revenge that, when his own reputation was under a cloud, and he is said to have been shunned by all respectable people, made him wish to humiliate one who had reproved him? Or was it that being in the intimacy of a Catholic court he realized that the Unitarian Church was in imminent danger of destruction unless its headlong movement away from the familiar faith and practices of all the rest of the Christian world could be arrested? All these explanations of his conduct have been given, and perhaps all of them are in some measure true. Certainly, as the trouble went on, his feeling toward David seems to have grown into ever more bitter hatred as David seemed to him to grow more stubborn and headstrong. The Unitarians of Transylvania have never ceased to hold his name in execration. Yet after all has been said, it deserves still to be remembered that one of the earliest and most persistent pioneers of Unitarianism, who for years imperiled his life for it, who did more than perhaps any other one person for its early spread in Poland, and was responsible for introducing it to those who could best promote it in

Transylvania, was the Italian physician, Giorgio Biandrata.

Though he had gained a temporary victory in securing the condemnation of David, and still guided the policy of the church for a little while afterwards, Biandrata's influence among the Unitarians from this time on grew steadily less. While it is not likely that he ever returned to the Catholic Church, as is sometimes charged, the rest of his life was spent in Jesuit circles at court, and his interest in his own church is said to have grown cold. Legend surrounds the time, place, and circumstances of his death, but the truth probably is that he died a natural death in 1588 at Gyulafehervar.

Socinus's part in the transaction also brought much criticism upon him, and it was believed for a time that he had willingly joined with Biandrata in a conspiracy to bring about David's death. But his conduct when carefully examined seems to have been entirely correct, as of one who tried simply by force of argument to bring David to a different view. Failing in this, he left Transylvania without having any part in David's trial, or being even aware that anything more was intended than to restrain him from preaching until a general synod should settle the doctrine of the church.

CHAPTER XXIV

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA AFTER DAVID'S DEATH, 1579–1690: A CENTURY OF CALVINIST OPPRESSION

The imprisonment of David left the Unitarian churches without organization or leadership. Biandrata's interest in their cause led him at once to set about organizing them on a foundation which should make them safe from further attacks under the law, and should ensure them an orderly and responsible growth. Within a month he called a general synod at Kolozsvar, and it was attended by nearly all the clergy. In their hearts very many of them sympathized with David and shared his views, and they were little inclined to fall in with any plans Biandrata might now have in hand; but to save the church from the charge of being "deniers of Christ," he got them (by misrepresentation or a trick, it is said) to adopt a confession of faith which was supposed to be compiled from books published in the time of John Sigismund. It made the adoration of Christ henceforth compulsory in public worship, and was designed to be a bar to any further changes in the direction in which David had been moving. A consistory of twenty-four members was chosen to manage church affairs, and a little later twelve deans were elected to have supervision of as many separate districts.

Biandrata also had a candidate for bishop; but the brethren were unwilling to vote for him while David still lived, so that on Biandrata's nomination the prince appointed his candi-

date both bishop and chief minister of the Kolozsvar church. The new bishop, Demetrius Hunyadi, was wisely chosen. He had been a protégé of John Sigismund, a friend of Stephen Bathori, and rector of the Kolozsvar school. While conservative in his beliefs, he was highly educated, as well as a man of great organizing ability. He soon convened the consistory to establish rules for the government of the churches, and it ordered that infant baptism, which had not been observed for some time, should be restored; while the ministers were all made subject to the bishop and consistory. In the autumn the judgment of the Polish churches on the case of David was received, strongly condemning the views of David. All but sixteen or eighteen out of 250 ministers subscribed to it, while most of the rest at length gave in. All debate on the disputed questions was henceforth closed. Bishop Hunyadi lived until 1592, and in his time the church became well established in ways that were safe and conservative, though they left little room for progress.

In many cases, however, the conformity was only outward. Whatever they might have been compelled to adopt, the ministers could not so easily change their convictions, and many of them continued quietly to believe and preach and practice as before. In fact, as soon as Biandrata's pressure was off, no serious attempt was made for several years to enforce the severe laws which had been passed against David's teaching; and various high nobles and officials were known openly to hold his views. Even a hundred years later there were many of the Unitarians who did not practice infant baptism; and refusal to adore Christ was widespread for nearly sixty years until, as we shall soon see, the subject again brought the Unitarians before the Diet.

David's views had been very generally accepted among

the churches in Lower Hungary, and as these were not subject to Transylvania but under the Turkish rule, they paid no heed to the new regulations. Moreover, many of the best ministers in the church now left Transylvania and went to Hungary that they might enjoy greater religious freedom. There was an angry interchange of letters, the Hungarians sharply upbraiding the Transylvanians for their desertion of David. The Hungarian churches now withdrew by themselves and chose a bishop of their own, and henceforth, in spite of efforts to win them back, they had little to do with the brethren in Transylvania, and little sympathy with them. At the same time, many of the nobles, setting political prospects before religious convictions, abandoned the Unitarian Church and professed the Calvinist or the Catholic faith. Transylvania was on the way to become Catholic again; and the next prince, the young Sigismund Bathori, who had been educated by the Jesuits, was the willing tool of their policy to turn the country over to Catholic Austria. He was persuaded to put many of the Protestant magnates to death on a false charge of treason, and he left his land for some years like a football to be fought over between Austria and Turkey, and to be wounded, burned, and pillaged by each in turn. For eighteen years from his accession in 1588 there was no peace or security in Transylvania. All this aggravated the misfortunes of the Unitarians.

Prince Sigismund surrendered his government to the Emperor Rudolf in 1595 and retired from the country. The Emperor then sent his bloody General Basta to subdue Transylvania and exterminate Protestantism. The Catholic bishop recommended that the Unitarian churches be taken away and their ministers banished, and in many cases this was done. The Jesuits returned and were given the

chief Unitarian church at Kolozsvar in 1603. General Barbiano, a Roman monk turned soldier, declared that they would kill every grown person in Hungary and Transylvania who refused to join the Catholic Church. Basta treated the Protestants so cruelly that for generations they used his name to frighten their children. He hung ministers up to smother in smoke from piles of their own burning books, or flayed them alive. His soldiers pillaged the houses of the nobles, and ravished their wives and daughters. Terrible famine followed. For a few months, while their enemies fell out with one another, there was a successful uprising of the Transylvanians under the leadership of a brave Szekler named Moses Szekely, who was a Unitarian.[1] He proved a great general, and won most of the country back, took Kolozsvar, expelled the Jesuits, and restored their church to the Unitarians. It looked for a time as if the Unitarians were again to have a ruler of their own faith; for after winning sweeping victories Szekely was elected prince at Gyulafehervar in 1603. He was about to be recognized by the Emperor when the enemy settled their quarrels and united against him, and a few weeks later he was defeated and killed in a night battle near Brasso (Kronstadt), and most of the nobility of the land were captured or fell with him. Basta returned, more cruel than ever. Most of the ministers fled the country, and the Unitarian bishop saved his life by hiding in an iron mine. The church at Kolzsvar was again given to the Jesuits, and for three years the Unitarians there had to worship secretly in a private house.

At length the Protestants of Hungary and Transylvania rallied under the heroic leader Stephen Bocskai, a Calvinist of Nagyvarad, who was elected prince in 1605.

[1] He was leader of the Szekler party who had supported Bekes.

Basta was utterly defeated, and the emperor sought peace. The liberties of both Protestants and Catholics were proclaimed, and Bocskai again expelled the Jesuits and restored to the Unitarians their churches and schools. The next year he died of poison. Of course in this troubled period the Unitarians could not hope to increase; but wasted as they were by war and persecution, it was wonderful how steadfastly they stuck to their faith under the leadership of their fearless and faithful bishops.

With Bocskai began a rule of Transylvania which, for nearly a century, remained in the hands of Calvinists, and the Reformed Church thus held the lead until 1690. They did not violently oppress the Unitarians, and they pretended to observe the laws of religious freedom; but they were as unfriendly as ever to the Unitarian faith and church, and hampered its growth whenever possible. Thus they insisted in 1605 that the Calvinist minority should be given equal rights with the large Unitarian majority at Kolozsvar. Soon afterwards it was ordered that Calvinistic preaching should be had there, where until now there had been only Unitarian churches; and then a church and school were set aside for the Reformed, and then another and another. In 1615 it was enacted that a church having mixed membership should be wholly controlled by those of the majority faith; and in general the government in every way used its power to favor the Calvinist cause as much as the law allowed.

From 1613 to 1629 Prince Gabriel Bethlen ruled. He was perhaps the greatest of Transylvania's native rulers, a wise and firm statesman; also a zealous Calvinist, deeply interested in religion, and determined in every lawful way to promote his own form of it. Yet the Unitarians, in spite of all they had suffered, were still very strong, and could

have kept at least even, had it not been for one thing which now arose to trouble them. When religious bigotry wishes to pursue a course of persecution, any pretext, however slight, will serve the purpose for entering on it. Bethlen found his pretext in the Sabbatarianism of some of the Unitarians. To understand this matter we must go back a little. After the death of David, Unitarianism showed two distinct tendencies. The conservatives of course followed the beliefs and observed the practices established by Biandrata and Bishop Hunyadi in 1579; but there were a great many who held with David, even though they dared not confess it, and who continued to go on further in the direction in which David had seemed to be setting out. Reacting against the new requirements, they took to studying their Bibles more than ever, and especially the Old Testament, in which they found various neglected commands which they now felt bound to keep. Hence very few years after David's death it was charged that at Kolozsvar many had given up having their infants baptized, were abstaining from eating pork or blood or things strangled, and in various other ways resembled the Jews, especially as they celebrated Jewish festivals and observed the Sabbath. Thus they came to be called Judaizers, or Sabbatarians. They spread most of all in Szeklerland, among the rural population; but they were inoffensive, held no open meetings, and for some time were generally tolerated. Their founder was one Andrew Eössi, who had come to his beliefs about 1588 while reading his Bible for consolation after the death of his three sons.

In the time of Sigismund Bathori, Sabbatarianism was coming to be regarded as practically a new religious sect, and it was proposed to punish it severely as an "innovation"; but war soon put a stop to the persecutions that

were begun. Although one or two more Diets passed laws against them, the laws were not enforced; but Bethlen discovered here a chance, by attacking the Sabbatarians, to weaken the Unitarian Church, to which the most of them belonged, and in 1615 he began a severe persecution of them as blasphemers. Three years later he had a general synod of the Unitarian churches called, and sent the Reformed Bishop Dajka to preside over it as his personal representative, and had the Sabbatarians summoned to attend it. To escape prosecution many of them at once went over to the Reformed Church; the rest were then excluded from their membership in the Unitarian Church and turned over to the Reformed ministers to be converted back to Christianity. Accompanied by 300 soldiers, Bishop Dajka next went through two whole counties where the Sabbatarians were most numerous, and under pretense of rooting them out he took the churches away from the Unitarians right and left, wherever there was the least suspicion of Sabbatarianism, and turned their ministers out of their pulpits and placed them under arrest. The Diet thought this was going too far, and interfered. In 1622, however, Bishop Dajka attained the same end in another way. As the law then stood, even the Unitarian churches in Szeklerland were to be visited and supervised by the Reformed bishop rather than by the Unitarian.[1] He converted a well-known Unitarian minister to the Reformed faith, though the fact was kept a secret, and took him with him as he visited the Unitarian churches. He would ask the members if they professed the same faith as this pastor Siko, to which they answered yes. Thereupon he reported that in his presence all these churches had abjured Unitarianism and professed the Reformed faith; their Unitarian ministers were turned

[1] See page 238.

out, and Reformed ministers were settled in place of them. Thus by a contemptible deception the Unitarians were deprived of sixty-two churches at once, and no attempt was ever made to right the wrong.

Sabbatarianism was now in a way to die out (for the exclusion of its followers from the church meant their disqualification from holding public office, and this was regarded as a very great loss), had it not been revived in a singular way. A man named Simon Pecsi had in earlier life been teacher of the three sons of the Eössi above mentioned, and after their death Pecsi had been adopted by him, and at length had inherited his large fortune. He then went abroad for extensive travel and study, and returning entered upon public life, became secretary to Bocskai, and at length chancellor under Bethlen. Falling under suspicion of disloyalty, he was imprisoned for nine years, during which he gave himself to much thought upon religious subjects. The result was that he came out of prison a zealous Sabbatarian, and by his able published writings and his wide personal influence soon spread the movement widely among all classes; while the Unitarian bishop, being a Pole, knew too little Hungarian to keep track of what was going on in his churches. Bethlen had now been succeeded by George Rakoczy I, another zealous Calvinist, who had the less love for Unitarians since they had supported his rival for the crown, one of their own number.[1] After settling his political problems, therefore, he began a new persecution of the Sabbatarian Unitarians, whom he required to return to one of the other "received" religions on pain of death and confiscation of property. Pecsi himself was again im-

[1] It was this Rackoczy who having intercepted a Unitarian letter addressed to one of the brethren in Transylvania in 1638 warned the Dutch to take measures to prevent the Socinians just driven out of Rakow from settling in Holland as was proposed. See page 171 n.

prisoned, and forfeited nearly all his property, though when at length released he is said to have secured himself against further trouble by joining the Reformed Church.

One more line of attack remained to be tried against the Unitarians: as to whether they were observing the law about the worship of Christ, which had been forced upon them at the time of David's trial. It was well known that many of the ministers had accepted the new creed at that time simply because they must, or else run the risk of being imprisoned or perhaps put to death as innovators; while many of the nobles had made no secret at David's trial that they favored his views. The matter was allowed to drift at the time, since for a generation the country was too much upset by political disturbances to pay much attention to the details of religion. They continued in their heresy. Rakoczy, however, began in 1635 to take more vigorous measures, and threatened, unless they changed, to prosecute them before the Diet. As they still persisted, a special Diet was called at Dees in 1638 to take up the matter. Again, as before, many became alarmed lest they lose their political rights, and for safety went over to the Reformed Church. In the end the parties reached an agreement known as the Settlement of Dees (*Complanatio Deesiana*),[1] which was accepted by the prince, the Diet, and all others concerned. This gave the Unitarian belief a new and clearer statement, and required a stricter adherence to the worship of Christ (though not as God), and to the use of the sacraments; while any one found innovating again was to be beheaded and to have his estates confiscated.

[1] In this document is the first official use of the word Unitarian as the name of the church, in the forms *Unitaria recepta religio,* and *Unitaria Magyar ecclesia.*

All this was then duly ratified in the church synod, a new catechism was based upon it, and from that time on the subject gave no further trouble.

The Diet at Dees took other actions affecting the Unitarians. It forbade the publishing of Unitarian books without license from the prince. Further action was also taken against the Sabbatarians, of whom some were sentenced to death, many others were imprisoned, and one was stoned to death by a street mob as a blasphemer, and his wife pilloried in the market-place and banished; while yet others had to submit to public humiliation, and all who would not recant had their property confiscated. From this time on, the Sabbatarians became negligible, though a few of them still remain to this day, now professed Jews in faith and customs.

Besides the misfortunes of which we have spoken, the Unitarians lost many churches in Szeklerland through an invasion of the Tatars in 1622, and in the same year many of their members at Kolozsvar died of the plague; while yet others in this troubled period (1616–1632) became demoralized, as we have noted,[1] because their Bishop Radecki, being a Pole, could not speak Hungarian, and thus could not give his churches the oversight they required. Hence the sixty years after David's death were a time during which Unitarianism in Transylvania steadily lost ground. Those that survived did so through their heroic faithfulness, and thus developed qualities they were greatly to need under Catholic persecutions in the next century. Meantime they were first to enjoy a half-century of comparative quiet, during which they might regain lost ground, and again develop a healthy church life.

[1] See page 253.

During the rest of the seventeenth century the Unitarians of Transylvania saw better days, and held their own fairly well. Their ministers and teachers were well educated in their college at Kolozsvar, and the more promising were sent for further education to Luclavice [1] in Poland, to Germany, or to Leiden and Amsterdam in Holland where they were kindly received by the Remonstrants. From now on they worked unweariedly to repair their losses and build up their church. They never long escaped injury from war, however. Prince George Rakoczy II was, as we have seen,[2] lured into invading Poland in 1657, and of his army of 50,000 only 3,000 returned. The flower of Transylvanian nobility perished or were taken into captivity, among them of course large numbers of Unitarians; and not long afterwards, while Austria invaded the country on the one side, Turks and Tatars came with fire and sword on the other, carrying many into slavery, and leaving burned homes and churches behind them; and in the wake of all this came the plague ravaging the whole land. For two years the church was unable even to elect a bishop, no synods were held, and the college at Kolozsvar was reduced to but nine students.

It was just at this period that the miserable company of Polish exiles arrived,[3] to find their Kolozsvar brethren kind and hospitable though impoverished; for friendly relations had long been kept up between the Unitarians of both countries, scholars and teachers had gone back and forth, and Poland had furnished several ministers for the Saxon Unitarian church at Kolozsvar, and even one bishop. The new Prince Michael Apaffi I arranged for their permanent

[1] See page 171.
[2] See page 174.
[3] See page 182.

settlement at a time when hardly another country in Europe was ready to make them welcome. Later on they were joined by other exiles, from Poland or Prussia; and while all were poor, and long afterwards were still obliged to ask aid from their more fortunate brethren elsewhere, on the whole they brought strength to the Unitarian cause.

The number of churches had now fallen to not much over 200—hardly half of what they had been in David's time; but under Bishop Koncz, 1663–1684, recovery again began, and churches were rebuilt or repaired. In one instance the Unitarians took from the Calvinists by force a church which had formerly been their own, and the prince approved their action. Koncz especially fostered a school by each village church, and soon brought these to a high state of excellence; the churches flourished again, and good discipline was maintained.

In Lower Hungary for more than fifty years after David's death, Unitarian churches, being under the protection of Turkish rule, flourished wonderfully in seven counties, a country as large as Transylvania itself. At Pecs in 1632 the Catholics were extinct, and nearly every citizen was a Unitarian; and so it was in three whole counties west of the Danube. Our records of these churches, however, are meager. After having had but one bishop of their own, they seem to have drawn closer to the Transylvanian brethren again, and not to have appointed another. Many of their ministers came from Transylvania, and they sent many of their sons to Kolozsvar to college. Toward the end of the seventeenth century they commenced surely to decline. The Jesuits had begun to come in and win the field back again. Wars between Austria and Turkey ravaged the country. In 1687 the Turks were driven from the land, and it now came back under Catholic rule. When

the Emperor took Pecs from the Turks he therefore gave the Unitarian church to the Catholics, and banished its ministers. The Calvinists were still tolerated in Hungary, and where they were numerous they, too, severely persecuted the Unitarians. Under this irresistible double oppression, and with no legal protection whatever, they had to yield. By 1710 the last of the churches in Hungary had been uprooted; their ministers were banished, and their members died off or joined the other churches. Ten years later but few were left, and before the middle of the century all had become Calvinist or Catholic, or else had left the country. Not until late in the nineteenth century was Unitarianism again planted in this region.

CHAPTER XXV

UNITARIANISM IN TRANSYLVANIA UNDER AUSTRIAN RULE, 1690–1867: A CENTURY AND A QUARTER OF CATHOLIC OPPRESSION

Ever since 1526 the Turks had occupied a large part of Hungary, and had held a sort of political guardianship over Transylvania; but in 1690, they were expelled from the land for good, at the end of a war in which the Unitarians bore a prominent part. Transylvania, with much enthusiasm at being again united in government with a kindred people, was joined to Austria, and Leopold I, King of Hungary and Emperor, was elected its prince. Now throughout its history Austria has been more closely under the influence of the Catholic Church than perhaps any other European country unless it be Spain. The century of intermittent oppression by Calvinists of which we have spoken in the last chapter was therefore now to be followed by a century of steady and severe Catholic persecution which was far worse. Soon after his accession Leopold issued in 1691 a celebrated document (the *Diploma Leopoldinum*) which was regarded as the Magna Charta of Transylvania. It was designed to secure to the Transylvanians under the new government all the rights they had enjoyed under the old; and in particular it promised that the existing rights of the four received religions should be continued without injury to churches, schools, or parishes, that all church

property should remain in possession of its present holders, and that the members of the several churches should have a fair share of the public offices and honors which they so highly prized.

The ink was hardly dry on Leopold's signature before plans began for breaking the promises he had so solemnly and publicly made. Leopold had been educated for the priesthood and was designed for a bishop, when his elder brother died and the crown fell to him at the age of seventeen. He was largely under the influence of the Jesuits, and his long reign was their golden age in Hungary as it was the dark age of the Protestants. Before becoming Prince of Transylvania he had been unspeakably cruel to the Protestants of Hungary. The Jesuits, maintaining that one was not bound to keep a promise made to heretics, soon induced Leopold to break his oath to preserve the religious liberties of his Protestant subjects. The Catholics therefore now began making demands upon the Protestants, and each demand yielded to only led to more. We need speak only of the oppressions affecting the Unitarians. In 1693 they were compelled to give up to the Catholics the school at Kolozsvar which John Sigismund had given them in 1566. Next the Catholics demanded the great church in the square which the Unitarians had held since David's time, and had lately repaired at large expense; but the demand was refused. In 1697 came a great fire which destroyed this church and another, as well as the school they had only just built to take the place of that seized by the Catholics, and several other buildings belonging to the church. Bishop Almasi sent one of the professors in the Unitarian school to Holland to solicit aid from the Remonstrants and Collegiants, and received 9,000

thalers (nearly $7,000) in response to his appeal,[1] and with contributions from the whole membership the buildings were restored; though, as we shall soon see, they were not to be kept for long. The other three religions now each demanded a church and a school with equal rights at Kolozsvar, thus crowding the Unitarians further out of the seat they had held for long over a century. In fact, the only ray of light in this dark reign was that in 1693 the right of visiting the churches in the Szekler counties [2] was restored to the Unitarian bishop, and that in 1696 the Unitarians were permitted to set up a new press at Kolozsvar, though they soon had to hide away even this.

Under the reign of Charles VI (1711–1740) oppression was still the rule. He took the oath as usual, and under Jesuit advice broke it as usual. In defiance of the law of the land he brought back the Catholic bishop and the Jesuits, and his agents began despoiling Unitarians and driving them from their churches by force in all parts of the land. In 1714 he sent General Steinville to Transylvania as governor, who began carrying on the oppression in true military fashion. He billeted his soldiers in the homes of the prominent Unitarians. In 1716 he at length took away from them by military force the great church at Kolozsvar which the Catholics had been coveting for over twenty years, and the Unitarians had occupied for a century and a half; and along with this the minister's house, school, professors' houses, endowment property, and press, all under a decree approved by the same emperor who had pledged his sacred word to secure them in all the rights they had possessed. The value of the property thus taken from the Unitarians

[1] See page 199.
[2] See page 238.

at Kolozsvar was estimated at not less than 200,000 crowns. The students of the school were scattered, and for a time no worship was allowed even in private houses. In 1721 yet another church at Kolozsvar was taken away, with its endowment funds; then that at Torda, then here and there all over the country churches were taken from the Unitarians on any pretext or none and given to the Catholics, even when the latter had but two or three members in a place. It was forbidden to build new churches to replace the old without express imperial permission, which of course could never be obtained. Persecutions like those of the early Christians were inflicted far and wide. Unitarians were gradually excluded from public offices, even the lowest, and were refused the political equality which was theirs by law. Even then, though many fell away, and many congregations were scattered or broken up before the end of the century, most did not lose hope even under the severest persecutions, but only redoubled their devotions and sacrifices.

Charles was succeeded by his daughter, Maria Theresia, whose long reign (1740–1780) continued the same policy toward Protestants which her father had practiced, but carried it yet further. She stands in history as one of the ablest and best rulers that Austria ever had; and she seemed to herself to be an advanced religious reformer, for she fell out with the Jesuits and expelled them in 1773. She was, however, a devoted and zealous Catholic; and although at her accession she had assured the Transylvanians that she would preserve all their ancient rights, privileges and liberties, heresy was to her mind an unpardonable sin which had no just claim to toleration. Hence she was little inclined to let mere laws of the land, though repeatedly confirmed by her predecessors, or promises made by them or herself, stand in the way, if by ignoring them

she could suppress or destroy in any part of her realm what she of course deemed the most damnable heresy. Her hand therefore fell heavily even upon the Saxon Lutherans of her own race, but most heavily of all upon the Unitarians. There is little to tell of what the Unitarians did during her reign, for they were reduced to their lowest ebb; but there is much to tell of what they suffered, for it is a melancholy story of forty years during which every conceivable means was used to destroy their church. The queen would use the arts of persuasion, and the subtle bribery of promises of favors and offices, when they would work; and when they would not, she resorted to various means of force. Thus by promising them high offices she got many wealthy nobles to change their religion. When a promising Unitarian youth went up to Vienna, she made him her god-son, and gave him rich presents, to induce him to turn Catholic. On the other hand she would give no high office to a Protestant, and hardly any office at all to a Unitarian; she forbade the election of Unitarian magistrates in all but two towns; she refused to let Unitarian books be printed, so that whatever books the ministers or professors wrote had to be circulated in manuscript copies; and during her whole reign only two Unitarian books were published. A carefully drawn plan for the systematic oppression of Unitarianism was adopted in 1744, which included a large fund for converting Unitarian boys and girls at Kolozsvar. Unitarians who sought a university education had long been going to the Protestant universities of Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, where funds had been established for their assistance; but in order that they might be forced to attend the Catholic university at Vienna, they were now forbidden to study abroad without special permission. Unitarians were forbidden to carry on public

religious discussions, or to make converts from other churches; their pastors were not allowed to visit the sick or administer baptism except among their own members, and no member of another church might marry a Unitarian.

The persecution did not stop at these acts of merely negative oppression. Children were taken away from their parents by force to be educated as Catholics; Unitarian schools were closed, and their scholars were then forbidden to go to any other school but a Catholic. An old law was revived which gave possession of the church in a community to the body having a majority of the population; and by colonizing for the purpose she secured Catholic majorities enough to claim the churches in many places. Various churches, schools, and parsonages were taken away by force, and it was still forbidden to repair old churches or build new ones. The support of the churches by tithes was cut off. At Szent Rontas, where the Unitarians some ten years before had assisted in the building of a pretty Catholic church, the Catholics turned about and seized the Unitarian church, school house, and cemetery, attacking in force while the Unitarians were at morning worship, and driving the pastor and the teacher from town. The Unitarians did not meekly submit to this outrage, but a month later recovered their property by force; whereupon the queen ordered it taken from them again and held until judicial investigation could be had and she should give a decision. It can easily be anticipated what decision she gave: after twelve years the case was at last decided in favor of the Catholics, and the name of the village was ordered changed to Holy Trinity.

There were cases of the finest heroism, as when at Bagyon a Catholic mob attempted to seize the Unitarian church while the men of the village were away; but the enraged Szekler women turned out and defended the building them-

selves, the younger fighting desperately outside the church, while the older within prayed for their success. In another village, when the Catholics raised a mob to attack the church, the Unitarians defended themselves and scattered the mob. For doing this they were arrested and ordered flogged, and as a further punishment they were ordered to build the Catholics a handsome church. At Brasso the Jesuits attacked the Unitarians during the celebration of the Lord's Supper, drove away the pastor, and spilt the bread and wine. So it went on all over the land during forty long years. The victims repeatedly appealed to the toleration decree of 1557, and to the guarantees in the Diploma of Leopold, so often confirmed since; but their complaints were uniformly ignored.

All these things wofully reduced the number and strength of the Unitarian churches, as it was meant that they should. Of the 425 churches and thirteen higher schools and colleges in Transylvania late in the sixteenth century, two hundred years of persecution had left fewer than 125, all of these of course far weaker than before, with a total membership of but 50,000, and only one school and college. Yet even now their spirit was not crushed. A young Unitarian officer, upon being dismissed from his office on account of his religion, wrote to his father, "I will beg before I will give up my religion." Such noble families as still remained were most generous to their church. The fewer they became, the more they comforted and helped one another. Their persistence in hanging together, and their willingness to sacrifice for their faith, became proverbial. The result was that persecutions which had been intended to destroy them not only failed of their purpose, but left them instead a united band of heroes; and this quality has persisted to this day.

To guide and inspire them in this dark period, God raised

up a great man, their greatest bishop after David, Michael Szent Abrahami, whom they love to call "the eye, heart, and tongue of the Unitarians" of this period, since he watched over them as their bishop, fathered them as their pastor, and taught them as the rector of their college. After an ample education at home and abroad, and a brief ministry, he began to teach in the college at Kolozsvar just before the Unitarians were robbed of it by the Catholics. After a time he opened the college in new quarters, now for the third time in its broken history, and before long became its rector. In 1737 he became bishop, and served thus for over twenty years. By his great energy and wisdom he saved the Unitarian Church from shipwreck, and recreated it. He was a man of distinguished ability as scholar, teacher, theologian, preacher, and administrator. He laid the foundation of the endowment funds of the Church, and gave it a much better organization than before. He reformed the church schools and, what was of greatest importance, he reduced its theology to a system. His *Substance of all Theology according to the Unitarians*, a work composed for his classes in theology, and widely circulated in manuscript for thirty years or more until its publication was allowed in 1787, is a work which did for the Unitarians of Transylvania what the Racovian Catechism did for the Socinians of Poland.[1] It is very conservative, is founded entirely on proof-texts of Scripture, teaches the worship of Christ and the eternal punishment of the wicked, and in various other details would seem to us now quite orthodox. It was evidently much influenced by Servetus, and by the editions of the Racovian Catechism published after the original Socinianism had become modified in Holland; but it has no Anabaptist tendencies. It lays much stress on the practical conduct of

[1] See pages 159–162.

Christian life, and must have had great effect in shaping the Christian character of the Unitarians in Transylvania. It is written in the finest spirit, is not at all controversial, and hence was well suited to overcome or soften down the enmity of the other churches; and in western Europe its publication aroused fresh interest in Unitarians and their teachings, and increased respect for them.

With the reign of Emperor Joseph II (1780–1790) better days began to dawn upon the Unitarians of Transylvania. Long before his mother's death he had revealed a much broader spirit than hers, and now he began to carry out a more tolerant policy. When on a visit to Transylvania as prince, he had received complaints from the Unitarians as to the injustice they had to suffer, and had promised to do for them what he could. So long as the queen lived he could do nothing; but when he came to the throne he redeemed his promise. Though he was full of reforming ideas, his rule is commonly called a political failure; but it is rendered glorious by the fact that he issued in 1780 an Edict of Toleration of the four religions, restoring and guaranteeing their ancient rights. He forbade further seizure of churches; and although he did not restore those that had been taken away, he offered indemnity for them, ordered 5,000 florins repaid to the Kolozsvar Unitarians for the loss of their church, did various other things for their relief, and allowed them to print Szent Abrahami's book just now mentioned. His brother Leopold II (1790–1792) was also wise and enlightened, and preserved the liberties that Joseph had granted, allowing Unitarians again to hold office and have equal rights.

Under the long reign of Francis I (1792–1835), the same liberal policy was continued. The edicts of toleration were ratified by the Diet and made a part of public law;

the four religions were again declared equal before the law, seizure of church property was forbidden forever, and freedom of the press was restored without censor. Unitarians were given a fair share of public offices, some of them high ones, and Francis came to be known as "Restorer of the rights of Unitarians." Thus protected by free and just laws, their weakened churches began at length to recover strength, and many new churches were now built in towns or villages. At Kolozsvar, where they had long had to worship in a common dwelling, they now built a large and fine church, college, and parish buildings. With revived strength came renewed growth and the planting of new churches, and lost ground began step by step to be regained.

In this period a great impulse was given to the Unitarian cause by a noble bequest from one of its followers. Laszlo Zsuki was the last surviving member of one of the oldest and most prominent families in Transylvania, and the heir to large estates. He had been educated at the Unitarian college, and felt that he owed much to it. He therefore determined to leave all his property for Unitarian causes, and to that end remained unmarried. After spending his lifetime in trying to improve the agricultural condition of his country, and being generous to his college, and rebuilding various churches, he left at his death in 1792 nearly 80,000 florins (about $40,000). This generous legacy helped to meet the most urgent needs of the poor churches and the college. A new college building was erected, professors' salaries were raised, and the needs of poor students and poor ministers and their widows were provided for. This good example was soon followed by others, and in 1837 the greatest of all their bequests was received. Paul Augustinovics was descended from the Polish exiles who came to Transylvania in 1660, and was the son of a poor minister

who had died and left him and his mother dependent upon the charity of the church. They were aided from the Zsuki fund, which enabled him to get his college education at Kolozsvar, and assisted him in getting started in his profession of the law. He showed his gratitude in a munificent manner. After having spent many years in high public office, he also died unmarried, leaving to the church a bequest of 100,000 florins (about $50,000), nearly his entire fortune, which has furnished its largest single endowment down to this day.

In 1821 something of pathetic interest occurred, when this little, persecuted, struggling, but heroically faithful group of churches made the thrilling discovery that beside themselves there were other Unitarians in the world, who were free, prosperous, and rapidly growing in strength. Ever since the exiles from Poland had gradually melted away over Europe, until at length the Transylvanian churches no longer heard from them, the Transylvanian brethren had generally supposed themselves the only Unitarians left in the world. For Transylvania was remote from western Europe, it was before the age of railroads, and there was only the rarest connection with England or America. It is true that one of the Unitarians (later to become Bishop Szent Ivanyi), while pursuing his studies in Holland, visited England not long after 1660; but if he met any liberal Christians there, they were not yet known as Unitarians, and they had as yet no organized movement. From time to time English travelers also had brought home reports of the interesting Unitarian Church in Transylvania; but their accounts had fallen on heedless ears, for English Unitarianism had no organization; and although some of the Transylvanians had for a generation known in a dim way of a similar movement in England, the knowledge had made no

real impression. It was not until 1821, after the Unitarian Fund had for some years been organized in London, that its Secretary, hoping to discover and interest liberal Christians on the Continent, sent abroad for circulation a little Latin tract entitled *The Unitarians in England: their Faith, History, and Present Condition briefly set forth.* It found its way to Transylvania and into the hands of the Unitarians there, among whom it aroused the greatest interest. It was like receiving powerful reënforcements at the end of a long and exhausting fight. An answer was sent in due time and communications have been kept up between the Unitarians of the two countries ever since. The Transylvanian brethren began to visit England, where they were most gladly received; a few years later two of them went to America, where they reported a yet more flourishing body as then sweeping all before it in eastern Massachusetts. It was a great tonic to the weary strugglers, and a prophecy that the cause they had fought for so long was going to win at last. In more recent years visits of western Unitarians to their brethren in Transylvania have been more frequent; and since 1860 their most promising candidates for the ministry have gone to England to finish their education. The mother church of Unitarianism has been aided in distress by its more fortunate kindred in England and America, who have strengthened its churches and colleges by generous gifts, while the works of English and American writers have been published in Hungarian.

Under the happier conditions now enjoyed after two full centuries of almost incessant struggles against oppression and cruelty, it might have been hoped that the Unitarians had entered upon a period of enduring peace. For nearly two generations, indeed, they had little that was serious to disturb them, and were steadily regaining their strength

and extending their influence. It was the longest quiet period that this martyr church has ever enjoyed. In 1848, however, came the revolution by which Hungary strove to free itself from the long and heavy oppression of Austria. Hungary declared its independence, and in its new Constitution recognized the Unitarian religion as legal throughout the whole kingdom (instead of merely in Transylvania, as before), and granted equal and perfect freedom to the several religions. But the revolution failed. Russia came to the aid of Austria; and Transylvania, as so often before, was again a battleground. The Wallacks (Rumanians) dwelling there, long denied relief from the oppression they had themselves suffered for centuries, now seized the occasion to rise against their Hungarian masters, against whom they committed the most fiendish atrocities, butchering hundreds of families in cold blood, killing old men, women, and children without distinction, and sacking and burning whole villages. The worst of these things were done where the Unitarians happened to be the most numerous, among the villages of Szeklerland.

When the revolution had been put down, Austria determined to crush the national spirit of Hungary, and realized that the center of this was in the Protestant churches. She therefore put the religious affairs of the country under the military administration of General Haynau, notorious for his cruelty. He abolished all the rights of Protestants, forbade their assemblies, dismissed their church officers, and placed the religious arrangements of the churches in every detail in charge of Catholic overseers. This policy did not succeed, and after two or three years the independence of the churches was restored; but attempts were still made to break them down in other ways. The Unitarian Bishop Szekely, with a salary of but $260 a year, was offered

wealth, honors, and high office if he would enter the service of the Catholics; but of course he refused. When he had gone to his reward soon afterward, it was nine years before the Unitarians, in spite of repeated protests, were permitted to elect a new bishop in his place.

In 1857 the Austrian government made one final attempt to stop Protestantism at its source. Under the pretense of raising the standard of education, it attempted to destroy the Protestant schools. It demanded that in number of professors and in salaries paid they should be made equal to the Austrian state schools; else their graduates would not be recognized, and would be excluded from the professions and from all important civil offices. It was necessary within a limited time for the Unitarians to raise something like $70,000; and the demand struck them, of all Protestants, most heavily, since they were the fewest and the poorest. They were horror-struck, for they realized that the demands had been purposely made so high that they could not possibly be complied with. In that case the government proposed to take their schools over, and Unitarian young people would henceforth have to be educated under Catholic or orthodox Protestant influences. Fortunately an English Unitarian named John Paget had long been living in Transylvania, and had been actively interested in the Unitarian cause there. He presented to the English Unitarians the appeal which their Transylvanian brethren sent forth, and by them it was also forwarded to America. The English raised 13,000 florins ($5,200), and sent it in 1858 by the hand of their Secretary, Mr. Tagart, who was the first English Unitarian minister to visit them. He brought them direct personal assurance of foreign sympathy, which gave them the greatest encouragement to continue their struggle. All arrangements were made to take

up a collection also in the American churches, when a sudden and overwhelming financial panic swept over the country, so that nothing effective could be done. The Transylvanians themselves were roused as never before to save their cause from ruin. They were all poor people, mostly farmers or villagers; but by assessments and subscriptions, and by mortgaging their farms to an eighth of their value, and making the most enormous sacrifices, they managed to raise in all as much as $72,000. Although they could not meet the full demands made upon them, their cause was saved, for their schools remained their own. The crisis had proved in some ways a blessing in disguise; for it awakened, as nothing else might have done, their dormant appreciation of what their church meant to them, it raised up friends in the West whose generous interest has been more active for them since that day, and it greatly improved their schools.

After this storm there now came another long period of calm. The churches now numbered but few over 100, and the members only from 50,000 to 60,000,[1] but again they took fresh heart. They were granted leave to elect a bishop again in 1861, and the honorable title of bishop, which the Catholic government had since the seventeenth century refused to recognize, was at last restored in place of that of superintendent. Since 1867, when Transylvania was again united to Hungary, and the Hungarian constitution was restored, the Unitarian Church has had in Hungary all the equal rights which had been promised at the revolution of 1848. The three hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the church was celebrated in 1868 with impressive ceremonies. State aid to the churches

[1] In a century the number of churches had remained nearly stationary, though their membership had about doubled.

has been granted since that year, and Unitarians have been appointed to some of the highest state offices. Church funds have been increased. English and American visitors have come more and more frequently, and have made generous gifts. The works of Channing and other western Unitarians have been translated and published in Hungarian. The first Unitarian church in modern Hungary, organized at Budapest in 1873, has been followed by a dozen or more others on the territory where many churches had flourished three hundred years ago. This brings the romantic story of Unitarianism in Transylvania down to the end of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE UNITARIAN CHURCHES OF HUNGARY AND TRANSYLVANIA IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

From the beginning of the twentieth century to the year 1914 the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, with its newer branches in Hungary proper, enjoyed a happy and prosperous life. All signs pointed to a long period ahead in which it might devote itself to the work of pure religion, unhindered by persecution or misfortune. The principle of religious toleration appeared to be permanently established in Hungary, and the oppression of one religion by another seemed forever a thing of the past. Ever since the revolution of 1848, which had brought all four churches closely together in the struggle against a common foe, the four "received religions" had lived side by side in the most friendly relations. It remains to describe the life of the churches during this period.

The Hungarian Unitarian Church, as its legal name now ran, had early in the twentieth century about 160 churches, of which some fifty were *filialæ*, or mission churches with no regular pastor, but only occasional supplies from neighboring churches, these latter being usually made up of converts from other forms of religion. The churches ranged in membership from a handful to over 2,000 each, and some fifteen had more than 1,000 members each. The

total membership was about 75,000, and was increasing pretty steadily at the rate of something over one per cent. a year. The great majority of the Unitarians were Szeklers, the rest Magyars. They had few magnates or higher nobility, but were mostly of the middle and lower classes, chiefly villagers or farmers, and half of them poor. The ministers must all be graduates of the Unitarian college at Kolozsvar, and had generally taught a few years in the parish schools before entering the pastorate. Their salaries ranged from $320 to $700 a year, but a large share of this was often paid in produce. Each minister had beside this the use of his house and a small farm which he tilled with his own hands, often assisted by the members of his congregation. His wife would herself make the homespun which the family wore. Pastorates were usually for life, but after forty years' service a minister might be pensioned, as his widow would also be, with provision also in case of accident.

If we went to visit one of the Szekler villages, we should find near the middle of its one long street a plain whitewashed church with belfry, and a school house near by. Entering on a Sunday we should find on the side of the room a high pulpit looking down on rows of plain wooden benches, all of them free. The men enter first, then the women, the elder before the younger. Men and women, all dressed in their gayest clothes, sit on opposite sides, with a large vacant square separating them. The service is very simple, consisting only of prayer, hymns, Scripture, and sermon. There is now no liturgical form; but though the sermons are without manuscript the prayers are written out and read by the minister. He is gowned, and his sermon is likely to be on some theme of practical religion, with little

doctrine, and no attack upon other churches or controversy with their beliefs, since this is forbidden by their constitution. There is both morning and evening service on Sunday. On week-days, too, summer and winter, the farmers come to the church at day-break, for a brief service of morning prayer; and on returning from their work at the end of the day they go to the church for evening prayer before returning home. There are churches in which it is said that not a day has passed for over 300 years without this daily worship. The Lord's Supper is observed four times in the year with great solemnity, for it is held in the greatest reverence.

There were elementary schools connected with each of the larger parishes, where the Unitarian children were taught by young ministers as teachers, with salaries of about $200 a year besides house and garden. At Kolozsvar, Torda, and Szekely Keresztur there were also Unitarian higher schools, or gymnasia; and at Kolozsvar was the Unitarian college and divinity school, with nearly 400 students, half of them from other churches; a faculty of some twenty-five well trained scholars, mostly ministers; a library of 50,000 volumes, and a handsome stone building erected at the beginning of this century. All these institutions are supported from the church funds, though even the college professors get hardly more than $500 a year and house, with a retiring pension. Though the Unitarians of Transylvania are a poor people, they have always paid especial attention to their schools, and these are so superior that they have been largely attended by students from Calvinist and Catholic homes.

The organization of the churches somewhat resembles that of the Presbyterians, and is close and efficient. At the

head of the whole church is the bishop, though we shall better understand his office if we think of him as a superintendent, a title which a Catholic government long insisted on applying to him instead of the other and more ancient one. He has previously been a minister, and usually a professor at the Kolozsvar college. He has the general oversight of churches and schools, their property and income. He visits churches and schools, and inspects the work and character of the teachers and ministers; calls synods, ordains ministers, and gives them their appointments. His salary is but $1,200. The governing body of the whole church is called the representative consistory, which consists of ministers and influential laymen, and is headed by the bishop and two chief curators or lay presidents. It meets each month, and is responsible to the chief consistory, which meets once each year at Kolozsvar, and every fourth year in one of its districts. It examines the reports of the representative consistory, meets in different districts in turn, passes laws for the churches and schools, administers the more important affairs of the church, and elects the bishop when his office falls vacant. Once in four years the consistory holds an especially important session, which is then called a synod. The church as a whole is divided into nine administrative districts, each of which is under the charge of an officer whom we may best describe as a district superintendent, or dean, who visits the churches and schools in his own district once every year and inspects their condition.

The beliefs of the Unitarian churches in Hungary are on the whole rather more conservative than those of English and American Unitarians. The Bible is taken as authority, and many of its traditions and teachings which have been abandoned by Unitarians in other lands are still accepted.

Such are the story of Adam and Eve, the miraculous birth of Jesus, and his resurrection and ascension. In most other respects the beliefs of the Hungarian Unitarians are not notably different from those of their brethren in other countries; and the Christ-worship long required by law and observed in form has disappeared from practice and from statements of belief.

The Transylvanian Unitarians throughout their history not only have been devoted and heroic in the extreme, as the previous chapters have amply shown, but in other respects they have manifested such characters as one might expect from those whose beliefs and practices are plain and simple, and who lay the greater stress upon homely piety and the good life because they attach the less importance to creeds and ceremonies. In the earlier period of their history an old Hungarian chronicler recorded that the Szekler Unitarians were stricter in their morals than other Hungarians. When Maria Theresia was employing every device to persecute the Unitarian Church out of existence, a Catholic bishop wrote to the court in Vienna that its members were thrifty, industrious, law-abiding, and exemplary citizens; but that these very qualities, and the growing prosperity that they produced, made their detestable doctrines the more dangerous and the more likely to infect their neighbors, while they were also a standing reproach to the character of the Catholic clergy. He therefore strongly urged that they be repressed. A Protestant historian a generation later reports that "their simple worship, the strict morality of their communities, the dignity, piety, and learning of their superintendents, have gained for them great consideration in the country." A German traveler of the last generation speaks of them as highly respected by the other churches for the fervor and simplicity of their faith, and says that their

schools, the morality of their villages, and their Sabbath observance, are universally praised. They are devoted to good education and to political freedom and progress, a brave, energetic, intelligent, and virtuous people, whose influence on the higher life of the country is admitted to be quite out of proportion to their numbers; while their influence upon religious thought has been such that many in other churches, even as in England and America, accept their beliefs, though not confessing their name.

Our story should have ended happily with the nineteenth century; but the great World War makes it necessary to add a supplement of new oppressions and sufferings, perhaps more nearly fatal than any previous ones in all the long and tragic history. In 1914 the brave Szekler farmers were called to arms, and many of them left their homes, never to return. This fact alone, added to the usual hardships of war, must have greatly weakened their churches. In 1916 the Rumanians invaded Transylvania, overrunning Szeklerland, though little else, before they were driven back. This meant further ruin to the Unitarian churches so numerous on that frontier. Finally, just as the war was at an end, the Rumanians again seized the now helpless land and began a brutal rule of oppression, robbery, and violence little if any milder than that used by the Germans in Belgium and France. The churches were oppressed and their people maltreated as almost never before in the whole long history of their martyrdom; their ministers deprived of their living, and in some cases imprisoned; their venerable Bishop Ferencz held captive, and forbidden communication with his churches or ministers; many of their members exiled and deprived of their homes or farms; their schools closed; their professional men reduced to manual labor; the church estates divided up among Rumanian peasants. The British

and American churches have come to the rescue as far as rescue is possible, but only time can tell whether the heroic endurance so often shown in the past will be equal to these latest and severest trials.

It is often asked why Unitarianism, if it be true, has not spread faster. Each chapter of this history makes one part of the answer more clear. It did not spread in Italy, Switzerland, and Germany because it was crushed out by oppression, even unto death, before it ever had even a fair chance to be heard and judged on its merits. Other faiths were never willing to meet it on equal terms. They were protected and supported by the state, while the state treated Unitarianism as a crime. In Poland, so long as it had even half-way protection under the law, it did spread and thrive wonderfully, as we have seen, in spite of the relentless opposition of every other form of religion, Catholic or Protestant; and it perished there only because the government abandoned its principle of toleration and made the profession of Unitarianism a capital offense. In Transylvania where, for the first time in history thus far, it had both the protection of equal laws and the active support of the rulers, it soon converted almost the whole country, though even then it did nothing to oppress rival faiths; and three centuries of oppression did not succeed in destroying it. What the result would have been if Unitarianism, arising only a few years later than Lutheranism, and even earlier than Calvinism, had in the past four centuries been given a chance to spread its doctrines in fair and even competition with theirs, can only be imagined. But we have next to follow the story of it in England, and to see how, after some early persecutions and a few martyrdoms, it has for two happier centuries flourished there under freer laws and a more tolerant spirit.

DIVISION V

UNITARIANISM IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER XXVII

THE PIONEERS OF UNITARIANISM IN ENGLAND, TO 1644

Thus far the path of our history has never been long or far out of sight of the stake, the block, or the prison; and the impression that remains most vivid with us out of the story of Unitarianism on the Continent is that of the persecutions it had to suffer. It will be a relief, therefore, to enter upon a further stage of our journey from which persecution is largely absent. In England, it is true, as we shall soon see, a few in the first century of the Reformation were put to death, and more were imprisoned, for denying the doctrine of the Trinity; but long before Unitarianism began to be an organized movement there, capital punishment, or even imprisonment, for heresy had ceased in England, and by comparison with what their brethren on the continent had suffered, the civil oppressions that English Unitarians had to endure can be called hardly more than inconveniences.

The permanent history of Christianity in England began when Augustine, "the Apostle of the Anglo-Saxons," was sent from Rome at the end of the sixth century as missionary. The English were for centuries devotedly faithful to the Church of Rome, and perhaps nowhere had it had a more splendid history than there, as its glorious cathedrals, and the monasteries and abbeys still beautiful in their ruins, bear witness. Long before the Reformation, however, Eng-

lish kings had become more or less restive under the exactions of the Pope, and his claims of authority over England; while at the same time the people at large were growing impatient of the great wealth and increasing corruption of the monks and priests, and hungry for pure religion. In the fourteenth century, in the time of John Wyclif, one of the "Reformers before the Reformation," an earnest effort was made to get the abuses of the Church reformed; and the Bible was translated into English and circulated in manuscript, so that those that were able to do so might read it for themselves, instead of having to depend for their religious teaching wholly upon the priests. For the time nothing permanent seemed to come of it; but a century and a half later, when Henry VIII, for reasons of his own, threw off his allegiance to the Pope, and had himself made the head of the Church of England, he found large support from his people.

The English Reformation thus begun was mostly a political affair, and for some time no important changes were made in the doctrines or ceremonies of the Church. On the contrary, those that held the doctrines of Luther were severely persecuted. The Bible and the three ancient creeds were taken as authority; and the king authorized the publication of the English Bible, which was ordered to be set up in all the parish churches, so that all might have a chance to read it. A hundred thousand copies of it were in circulation within about twenty years, and the reading of it not only helped on the Reformation among the people, but eventually, as we shall see, paved the way for further reform of doctrine. Reformation of the Catholic doctrines went slowly on under the leadership of the clergy, until at length, under Edward VI, who was a convinced Protestant, a new Prayer Book was adopted, and new Articles

of Religion, and so the Church of England became definitely established in its own ways. Queen Mary tried her best to restore the Catholic religion, and to this end put many Protestants to death, while many more fled to Geneva, where they came under the influence of Calvin; but her reign was short. Upon her death the Protestants returned in full force, and under Elizabeth the Reformation was fully organized, with a doctrine which was a compromise between Calvin and Luther, and a form of worship and ceremonies which were a compromise between Catholic and Protestant.

Many of the Protestants, however, thought that the Reformation ought to be carried much further, so as to purify the Church of all traces of Romanism in doctrines, government, ceremonies, and forms of worship. These came to be known as the Puritans, and for a century or more they formed the most vital element in English religious life. In Elizabeth's time they developed in two different directions. The one of these was taken by those who despaired of any satisfactory reform in the Church of England, and therefore withdrew from it entirely. These became known as Separatists. Some of them remained in England, and, despite persecution, multiplied and at length became powerful; others fled to Holland, and thence in 1620 to New England, as the Pilgrim Fathers. The other party, the Puritans proper, although they disapproved of many things in the Church of England, tried to stay within it, hoping to be able to bring about the reforms they desired. They objected to government of the Church by a superior order of bishops, preferring a Presbyterian form of government; and they so much disapproved of liturgy that they would not use it in worship. Hence when Elizabeth, in order to secure uniform worship in all the English churches, tried to enforce an Act of Uniformity (1559), the Puritans be-

gan to worship in separate meetings of their own, and eventually to form their own separate organizations.

Many were the attempts to hold the Protestants of England together by force in one national Church, with one government and one form of worship. Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I severely persecuted those who refused to conform. Then came a reaction: the Puritans gained control of Parliament, and for a short time the established religion of England was Presbyterian. Then, under Cromwell, control passed into the hands of the Independents, until at length under Charles II the Episcopal Church was again established, and in 1662 was passed the Act of Uniformity, requiring that all congregations conform to the prescribed form of worship, and that all ministers be ordained by bishops. This was the beginning of that deep division of English Protestantism into Anglicans and Nonconformists which has continued to this day; for out of the 9,000 clergy in the Church of England, some 2,500 refused to conform, and were therefore compelled to leave their pulpits and give up their livings. They were for the most part the ablest and most earnest of the whole clergy. Additional acts of Parliament were soon passed to oppress the Nonconformists yet more severely, and their lot was a most unhappy one until 1689, when the passage of the Toleration Act permitted them again on certain conditions to meet together for public worship under their own forms. During all this period since the rise of the Puritans, questions of doctrine had been little attended to; but while the Puritans still remained strict Calvinists, the Church of England had softened down its Calvinism toward that Arminianism which we have already met [1] among the Remonstrants in Holland. Not heresy in points of doc-

[1] See page 200.

trine, but nonconformity in service of worship, was regarded as the great offense, and was most often punished under the laws.

It was out of such conditions in the religious life of England, disturbed not only by the hostility between Protestants and Catholics, but by controversies scarcely less bitter among the Protestants themselves over the forms of worship or of church organization and government, that English Unitarians arose. The movement began, as in other countries, with its little army of martyrs, for the act for the burning of heretics was enforced until 1612.[1] Even after that Unitarianism was liable to legal prosecution during many generations; for deniers of the Trinity, as well as Catholics, were expressly excluded from the benefits of the Toleration Act; while the Blasphemy Act of 1698 was especially aimed at Antitrinitarians, punishing their offense with civil disability and, if repeated, with imprisonment. They were not relieved of this until 1813. In a country where the Established Church controls nearly all the social prestige, and where dissent is widely regarded as almost a badge of social inferiority, Unitarians have throughout had to bear not only their share of the burdens that fall to all Dissenters, but the additional one of being excluded by both Anglicans and Dissenters as heretics. Their oppressions and burdens are of course not for a moment to be compared with those suffered by their brethren of like faith in Poland and Transylvania; yet they have been no light thing, and the bearing of them has developed devotion and heroism of a fine and sturdy type.

The Unitarian movement in England did not spring from any single source. We may discover at least four fairly distinct streams of influence that flowed together in it before

[1] The act dated from 1401, and was not repealed until 1677.

the end of the seventeenth century. These are: first, the influence of the Bible itself; second, the influence of Italians and other foreign thinkers at the Strangers' Church in London; third, Anabaptist influences; and fourth, the influence of Socinianism. Let us examine each of these in turn.

Wyclif's manuscript translations of the Bible had been widely circulated from about 1380 on, and it is said that some of his followers were tinged with Antitrinitarianism; but this Bible had to be read in secret, as did Tyndale's first printed New Testament of 1525, for fear of the law. In 1535, however, the English Bible began to be accessible to all, and many were reading it for the first time. First and last the influence of this book, when read in comparison with the creeds, has underlain all others leading men to reject the doctrine of the Trinity. Some of the most notable of the early English Unitarians declared they had never read nor heard the Unitarian doctrine, but had come to it solely through reading their Bibles. This influence was likely to be the more powerful, since the Articles of Religion of the Church of England themselves expressly declared that the Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation, and that one need not believe anything not supported by them.

The second influence was found in the Strangers' Church. In the first generation of the Reformation many Protestants from Catholic countries on the continent fled to Protestant England for freedom of worship and safety from persecution. There were Italians, Spaniards, Dutch, French, and others. Since they could not understand or speak English, they could neither worship in the English churches nor be overseen by the English bishops. Hence a Church of the Strangers (i. e., foreigners) was chartered in London in 1550 to be under the oversight of a superintendent of its own, subject to the Bishop of London. It had

at one time 5,000 members, and branches in eleven provincial towns. Since these churches received free spirits from all quarters, and since on account of their foreign tongues they could not be closely watched, they might easily become infested with heresy. To the church in London came Ochino,[1] not yet an Antitrinitarian, but headed in that direction; Giacomo Aconzio,[2] who was denied the communion on account of his alleged Arianism; Cassiodora de Reyna, a professed follower of Servetus, and minister to a Spanish congregation of the church for five years; Lælius Socinus,[3] and doubtless others less known to fame. Discussion of doctrines during the first generation of Protestant thinking may very well have been as free here as it was in the similar Italian church at Geneva [4] at about the same time; and though it does not seem very likely that this church of foreigners had wide influence upon the beliefs of Englishmen, it is known that several of those that were punished for some form of Antitrinitarianism had been connected with it.

A more important influence was that of the Anabaptists, whose connection with antitrinitarian thought we have often noted in earlier chapters.[5] In 1535 many of them fled to England to escape a severe persecution which had broken out against them in Holland, in which one of their number had been cruelly put to death. They were received with tolerance, and soon spread through the kingdom, especially in the eastern counties, actively spreading their peculiar doctrines as they went. Their theology was not settled, but they took only the Bible for their authority; and upon this some of them built extravagant and fantastic doctrines,

[1] See pages 71–72, 101, 111–114.
[2] See page 293.
[3] See pages 114–116.
[4] See pages 101, 102.
[5] See chapters vii, xv, xxi.

while some of them revived old heresies as to the Trinity or the person of Christ, or invented new ones of their own. Before many years their teachings began to attract the attention of the authorities, and for being Anabaptists twenty-eight of them were burnt under Henry VIII, and many more under Edward VI. Just what their heresies were does not clearly appear, for they were more or less vague and confused in their thinking, and their doctrines have doubtless been misunderstood or misrepresented by their persecutors who tell us of them; but there was probably more or less Arianism or Antitrinitarianism mixed up with them, for we know that Arian and Anabaptist were often used as synonymous terms in the sixteenth century. Seeing that they were of a humble class of people, and that there was much about them to create prejudice in the public mind, it does not seem likely that they had a very important influence in preparing the ground for Unitarianism in the quarters in which it finally took permanent root.

Some of these humble Christians, though we know little of them beyond their martyrdom, deserve to be mentioned and remembered by us for what they suffered as the first rude pioneers of our faith in England. Passing by the Rev. John Assheton of Lincolnshire, who was the first English Protestant known to have been called to account for denying the Trinity and the deity of Christ, but who in order to escape the stake confessed his crime and recanted his "errors, heresies, and damned opinions" in 1548, we find our first actual martyr in England in 1551, at a time when there was much alarm in church circles over the rapid spread of "Arianism," and strict measures seemed necessary to repress it. Dr. George van Parris, a surgeon who had come from Mainz to London to practice his profession among the Dutch there, and was highly praised for his godly life, was

excommunicated from the Dutch branch of the Strangers' Church for declaring that Christ was not very God, and was burnt at Smithfield in 1551. He was apparently an Arian. In Queen Mary's time, while a number accused of Antitrinitarianism saved their lives by recanting, one Patrick Packingham, a dealer in hides, was burnt at Uxbridge in 1555, and others were imprisoned. Even in prison our heretics could not refrain from discussing the disputed doctrines with their orthodox fellow-prisoners; and when reason fell short, other forms of argument were used, as appears from the quaint and impassioned *Apology of John Philpot: written for spittyng on an Arian*, by a reverend Archdeacon of Winchester, whom Mary had imprisoned for his Protestantism, and later sent to the stake.

When Elizabeth came to the throne, the law for burning heretics was abolished, and she was so much inclined to broad toleration in religious beliefs that she accepted Aconzio's dedication to her of a book which urged that the necessary beliefs should be reduced to the fewest and simplest.[1] But the Anabaptists kept coming into the country too fast, and heresy gained ground so rapidly that the fires had to be lighted again. In 1575 a whole little congregation of Flemish Anabaptists while holding a secret meeting in London were arrested and imprisoned for a heresy with re-

[1] Aconzio was an Italian, a lawyer by profession, who had also devoted himself to military engineering. Becoming Protestant in faith he fled from Italy, came to England, and was long in Elizabeth's service constructing fortifications. He was the most distinguished member of the Strangers' Church, but was excommunicated from it for his views, and a little later, in 1565, published his *Stratagems of Satan*, which was published in five different languages and in print for more than a century, and had a wide and powerful influence throughout Europe in encouraging liberal beliefs and a tolerant spirit. Whether or not he believed in the Trinity, he at least did not think it an essential doctrine.

gard to the birth of Christ, and were threatened with death. Most were banished, a few recanted, and one died in prison, while Jan Peters and Hendrik Terwoort were burnt at Smithfield. In 1579 Matthew Hamont, a ploughwright, was burned at Norwich for denying the deity of Christ; as were also John Lewes in 1583, Peter Cole, a tanner, in 1587, and the Rev. Francis Ket in 1589. James I, indeed, deemed it better policy to let heretics silently waste away in prison than to give them public execution, and no doubt many came to their end thus whose names remain unknown. It deserves mention, however, that the last two persons put to death in England for heresy were Antitrinitarians, Bartholomew Legate burnt at Smithfield (his brother Thomas also died in prison), and Edward Wightman burnt at Lichfield, both under King James in 1612. When already at the stake Legate was offered pardon if he would recant, but he remained stedfast. Wightman, feeling the pain of the fire, recanted and was set free, but later refused to confirm his act and was burnt. The law under which these things were done remained nominally in force until 1676; and in Scotland as late as 1697 a young student of eighteen, Thomas Aikenhead, was hanged at Edinburgh charged with denying the Trinity. But one more victim may be mentioned, a nameless Spanish "Arian," who was condemned to death at about this time, but wasted away in prison at Newgate.

Thus even in England at least ten Protestants were put to death for some form of Unitarianism, and there is no telling how many more died in prison. All or nearly all of these got their heresy from Anabaptist sources; and many others who suffered on the general charge of being Anabaptists may have held similar views. Of course, it is not to be supposed that these martyrs held what is known as Unitarianism to-day; for many of their views would no

doubt seem to us very extraordinary. The noteworthy thing is that they were all reaching out after some views of the nature of God, and the nature and work of Christ, which should satisfy them better than the teachings of the creeds. They were therefore true pioneers of Unitarianism. But they were for the most part isolated from one another, they formed no concerted movement, and they were so mercilessly persecuted out of existence that they do not seem to have left behind them any great influence upon the Unitarian movement that later established itself in England.

Beyond doubt the widest and deepest influence, therefore, of the four that were mentioned above, was that of Socinianism, which became active in England from early in the seventeenth century. It is likely that this was first introduced into England through Socinian books, many of which had by this time been published in Holland; but both before and after their exile from Poland occasional Socinian scholars kept coming to England and making the acquaintance of scholars and churchmen there. At a later time also these influences were reënforced by many Englishmen who went to Dutch universities to study, and there came into contact either with Socinians or with Socinian thought among the Remonstrants. In these ways Socinianism kept exercising a steady influence upon English religious thought until well into the eighteenth century, by which time English Unitarians had long been exerting an independent influence of their own. This influence was shown in particular in three different ways: the acceptance of the Socinian spirit of tolerance of difference in belief (which led to the Latitudinarian movement in the Church of England), the application of the Socinian test of reason to religious doctrines, and the adoption of Socinian doctrines as to God,

Christ, or the atonement. The name Socinian was loosely applied to all three of these tendencies, so that many were called Socinians for one or other of the first two reasons who never accepted the Socinian system of doctrine.

Wide public attention in England was first drawn to Socinianism (as had perhaps been intended) by the dedication of the first Latin edition of the Racovian Catechism [1] (1609) to King James I. His majesty evidently did not much appreciate the compliment, for the work was burnt by royal command five years later. It may indeed have tended to rouse his anger against Legate and Wightman. James was a Scotch Calvinist born and bred, and deemed himself no mean theologian; for when Vorst's book *On God and His Attributes* was being imported from Holland, he not only had it burnt at the two universities and at London in 1611 (the same year in which the "King James Version" of the Bible was published), but he wrote a book himself to confute it, calling Vorst a monster and a blasphemer, and using his influence to get Vorst dismissed from his chair at the university.[2] The flames, however, were unable to keep Socinian books from coming into the country more and more; for before the middle of the century Socinian commentaries, catechisms, and doctrinal and controversial writings in Latin for the use of scholars, were being printed in great numbers in Holland, and a few were printed even in England. A synod of the Church of England finally took notice of all this, and in 1640 adopted measures to check "the damnable and cursed heresy of Socinianism," prohibiting all but the higher clergy and students in divinity from having or reading Socinian books (implying that they had already come into common circu-

[1] See page 159.
[2] See page 197.

lation), yet thus at the same time leaving the door as wide open as any reasonable Socinian could have asked. Nevertheless it was still declared in 1672 that one could buy Socinian books as readily as the Bible.

A few Socinians also came in person. Adam Franck was discovered by Archbishop Laud in 1639 when, doubtless as a Socinian missionary, he was trying to make converts among the students at Cambridge. Wiszowaty [1] came to England as a traveling missionary early in life, and met several distinguished men. At least four members of the distinguished Socinian family Crellius [2] visited England, of whom Paul studied at Cambridge, while Samuel in repeated visits formed an intimate friendship with the Earl of Shaftesbury, and with Archbishop Tillotson, who publicly spoke in high appreciation of the Socinians, and was unfairly charged with being one himself. Several Unitarians also came from Transylvania, while Paul Best, who had traveled from England thither and to Poland, had debated with the Unitarians in Transylvania and been converted to their views, had studied Unitarian theology in Germany for some years, and had finally returned to England full of missionary spirit, was condemned to death by Parliament in 1645 for denying the Trinity, though the sentence was never executed and he was released after being two or three years in prison.

Many more examples might be given to show how wide and deep the spread of Socinian influence in England was coming to be. At the time of which we speak it was not yet an organized movement—the laws stood in the way of that; but it was a ferment everywhere present. The orthodox writers realized this and wrote book after book full

[1] See page 187.
[2] See page 190.

of warning. One writer enumerated 180 different flagrant heresies that had come from independent study of the Scriptures without the restraint of the creeds, and among these the Socinian teachings are most prominent. Another says Socinianism is corrupting the very vitals of church and state, which are much endangered by it. A third wrote three volumes to describe the *gangrene* that was infecting the nation. A fourth writes, "There is not a city, a town, scarce a village in England where some of this poison is not poured forth." By such warnings as these Parliament was finally spurred up to pass in 1648 a "Draconic ordinance" against blasphemies and heresies, which made denial of the Trinity or the deity of Christ a felony, punishable by death, without benefit of clergy. Within a few months, however, the government changed, so that the law was never carried into effect, and the heresy kept on spreading. In the next chapter we shall see how this widespread movement came to a head in a man who by his voice and his pen gave it personal leadership, and thus became "the father of the English Unitarians," John Bidle.

CHAPTER XXVIII

JOHN BIDLE AND HIS SUCCESSORS, 1644–1687

The pioneers of Unitarianism in England whose influence we traced in the last chapter were isolated and widely separated individuals. They had no separate congregations where they might spread Unitarianism by preaching, they wrote no books to spread it among those who might read, and they made no effort to work together and organize a movement. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises," and they left no descendants to continue their work. In contrast to these we turn now to another pioneer who was, with one possible exception, the first Englishman to gather and preach to a Unitarian congregation, and the first one to publish Unitarian books, a man who spent a large part of his adult life in prison for his faith, but left behind him friends and followers who continued his work, so that the movement he started has continued to this day. He is therefore deservedly called "the father of the English Unitarians."

John Bidle [1] was born in 1615/6 at Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire, the son of a dealer in woollen cloth. Before he was ten years old he showed such promise at school that a neighboring nobleman was led to make a handsome annual contribution toward his education. In due time he proceeded to the University of Oxford, and was ad-

[1] The name has more commonly been spelt Biddle.

mitted to study at Magdalen Hall, where he graduated in 1638 with high reputation as a scholar, became a tutor, and at length received the Master's degree. His reputation now brought him an appointment as master of the Crypt School at Gloucester, where his teaching gave great satisfaction.

At the university he had already shown an independent mind, and now, rather than blindly to accept what others declared were the doctrines of the Bible, he set himself while teaching to studying it for himself. He came to know the New Testament so well that he had it all by heart except the last few chapters, in both English and Greek. Though he had never read any Socinian writing, he became convinced from the Bible alone that it does not teach the common doctrine about the Trinity, and he also felt that the doctrine was not reasonable in itself. He frankly told his thoughts to others, but they complained of him to the authorities, and he was held to answer the charge of heresy. The authorities were not satisfied with his confession of faith in one God in but one person, and in Christ as truly God; but after a few days, having considered that perhaps the words might be variously understood, he consented to express belief in the three persons.

Bidle now continued to study the Bible more earnestly than ever, and at length drew up his conclusions in the shape of *XII Arguments drawn out of the Scripture; wherein the commonly-received Opinion touching the Deity of the Holy Spirit, is clearly and fully refuted.* These arguments were formally stated like propositions in logic, and were supported by Scripture texts and comments upon them. This paper he showed to some friends, one of whom forthwith again reported him as a heretic; and the result was that, although he was dangerously ill, he was at once thrown into jail, to be held until Parliament could act on

his case. The larger part of the remaining seventeen years of his life he spent in prison or exile for his religious faith. An influential friend soon procured his release on bail, until six months later he was summoned to Westminster for trial. Here he made no secret of his not believing in the deity of the Holy Spirit unless he should be convinced otherwise from Scripture, but he refused to commit himself as to the deity of Christ, which had been made no part of the charge against him. The case dragged on, and for many months he was held in custody. He at length appealed to Sir Henry Vane to get his case determined; but although he was often called up for further examination before the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, nothing resulted, and he was kept in confinement for the next five years.

He now resolved to appeal to the public, and managed to get his *XII Arguments* published (1647). It was only a little pamphlet, hardly more than a tract, of less than fifty pages of very small size, and altogether it contained no more matter than the short gospel of Mark; but it created a tremendous sensation. Bidle when called into court did not deny responsibility for it, whereupon he was sent back to prison, and it was ordered that his blasphemous pamphlet be called in and burnt by the hangman. This only increased its reputation, and a second edition was sold before the end of the year. Its arguments were so convincing, and its influence was so much feared, that two large books were written the next year, and a third later, to confute it. It was also carried to the Continent, and in Holland it was so much read that a famous Dutch theologian thought it necessary four years later to print a large volume against it.

The next year Bidle proceeded to publish over his own name his second work, *A Confession of Faith touching the*

Holy Trinity, according to the Scripture (1648). It was about as long as the gospel of Matthew, yet still not more than a little pamphlet; but it created an even greater stir than the former tract. In this writing Bidle did not deny the doctrine of the Trinity, but simply tried to purify it of the corruptions that the Catholic Church had brought into it, and to bring it back into harmony with Scripture. Like Servetus,[1] he objected to the philosophical terms that were used to express it, and argued that the doctrine as then taught gave us three Gods instead of one, stood in the way of pure religion, and prevented many from accepting Christianity. He therefore set forth his own belief as to the Trinity in six plain articles, each supported by Bible texts and arguments upon them. Like Servetus, he held that though Christ had only a human nature, yet he was Son of God, and was also God. This tract was soon followed by a third, but little longer, in which he brought together in support of his views quotations from the early Fathers of the Church. These tracts made so great a stir that to deter Bidle from repeating his offense, or any one else from following his example, Parliament passed a "Draconic Ordinance" [2] decreeing the death penalty against any one denying the Trinity or the deity of Christ or of the Holy Spirit.

Fortunately for Bidle, this ordinance remained a dead letter for several years, during which the temper of Parliament somewhat softened, and he was at length released on bail. He was allowed to go to Staffordshire, where the gentleman who had procured his release employed him as his

[1] There is no evidence that Bidle was acquainted with the writings of Servetus, but by now he had evidently come to know the Racovian Catechism, by which his *Confession of Faith* seems to have been influenced.

[2] See page 298.

chaplain, and appointed him preacher in one of the parish churches. It was not long, however, before he was ordered returned to prison, and although his friend dying soon after left him a small legacy, his scanty means were soon used up, so that he could not have obtained the ordinary comforts of life, had not another friend who knew of his fine scholarship secured employment for him in correcting the proofs of a new edition of the Septuagint. He was not only deserted by people in general, but only one clergyman visited him in all the six years. Finally in 1652 Parliament passed a general Act of Oblivion, under which Bidle was released, and his broken imprisonment of more than six years was at an end. His little *Confession of Faith* and its sequel continued to have their influence, and as many as eight years after their publication a large book was published to refute them.

Bidle's long imprisonment had attracted much attention to him, and as soon as he was released he took advantage of the more tolerant policy of the government, which now favored religious liberty, and began holding meetings in London. Here he gathered together for religious worship every Sunday many friends whom his little tracts had converted to his views, and he explained the Scriptures and preached to them. They organized an independent congregation which ere long began to attract the attention of strangers. Its members came to be known as Bidellians, and also as Socinians, though they themselves preferred to be called "mere Christians." Although there are rumors of one or two similar congregations in England before this, they were obscure and short-lived, so that this congregation of Bidle's may fairly enough be called the first Unitarian church in England. It continued its meetings, with some interruptions, at least as long as Bidle lived. Ortho-

dox ministers sometimes attended the meetings and entered into disputes with Bidle on points of doctrine, but they always found him ready to give reason for the faith that was in him.

In 1651/2 a Latin edition of the Racovian Catechism was published in London, and when it was brought to the attention of Parliament the next month its teachings were declared to be "blasphemous, erroneous, and scandalous," and all copies that could be found were seized and burnt.[1] Yet the following year an English translation was brought out.[2] At about the same time Bidle reprinted his earlier tracts and published an English translation of a life of Socinus and of two little Socinian tracts. These, however, were soon quite overshadowed by a new work of his own, *A Twofold Catechism*[3] (1654), the second part being a brief Catechism for children. Bidle was by now well acquainted with the works of Socinus, but although he took many questions and answers from the Racovian Catechism, he was not wholly satisfied with it. In this book, therefore, he aimed to restore the pure teaching of Christianity by giving answers entirely in the very words of Scripture, whose divine authority he accepted. This little book covered not only the doc-

[1] This is sometimes confused with the burning of the first Latin edition in 1614. See page 296.

[2] This translation is sometimes attributed to Bidle, but this is doubtful. It purported to have been printed in Holland.

[3] Two years after Bidle's death this work was translated into Latin for circulation on the Continent by Nathaniel Stuckey, a lad of fifteen who had been a member of his congregation and was warmly attached to him. The boy died at sixteen, and the next year his mother undertook charge of the education of two of the children of Christopher Crellius, a distinguished Polish Socinian in exile. This indicates close relations between Bidle's followers and the Socinians on the continent. It was the two sons of one of these children that emigrated to America. See page 190.

trine of the Trinity as his first tracts had done, but all the doctrines of Christianity, and it made much bolder attacks upon the orthodox doctrines than he had made before, and by sharp contrasts it showed how clearly they contradicted the words of the Scripture.

The Catechism roused a greater storm than ever. It went over seas, and circulated widely in Holland, where it seems to have been translated into Dutch, and was regarded as the most dangerous form of Socinianism yet attempted. One of the Dutch theologians, who had already refuted the Racovian Catechism in a book five times its size, now came forward again to defend the orthodox doctrine against Bidle's "Socinian Atheism," which seemed to be creeping into the country so fast; and in another large volume he took up and answered its teachings in great detail. Another took the English government to task for allowing Socinianism to spread so far. This criticism stung the English. The Council of State therefore requested the famous Dr. Owen of Oxford, who had lately answered the Racovian Catechism, to answer this one also. How serious a task he took it to be may be judged from the fact that his answer filled nearly 700 large and closely printed pages. Bidle was now attacked from many a pulpit, and after having been at liberty for nearly three years he was brought before Parliament and charged with being the author of a book full of scandalous teaching. All copies of his book that could be found were ordered to be burnt, and he himself was placed in the closest confinement, and denied writing materials and any visitors. The prospect was that when his case came to trial he would be condemned to death; but after a few months Parliament was dissolved, and Bidle was set free before his case was called.

If one supposes that Bidle, warned by the danger he had so fortunately and unexpectedly escaped, now sought to avoid further trouble by preserving henceforth a discreet silence, he little understands the nature of John Bidle; for though he was the mildest and gentlest of men, he had a full measure of the excellent British virtue of obstinacy in a good cause. As soon as he was released from prison, instead of avoiding his enemies by leaving London, he remained right there, and went back to preaching precisely as he had done before. The orthodox were determined to put him to silence. His teaching had won a good many adherents in a Baptist congregation, whose pastor being much disturbed over the matter therefore challenged Bidle to a public debate. After declining for a time, Bidle at length consented, and when it was asked at the beginning of the debate whether any one present denied that Christ was God, he replied that he did. Even before the debate was concluded he found himself arrested and lodged in prison, to be tried for his life for this heresy, and at first he was not even allowed legal counsel. His trial aroused great public interest. The Presbyterians attended it, and presented petitions against him, while the Baptists appealed in his behalf, and printed various things in his favor. Cromwell, as head of the government, being unwilling wholly to offend either party, at length (1655) cut the knot by banishing Bidle for life to the Scilly Islands, though he afterwards showed where his sympathies lay by granting him a pension of a hundred crowns a year.

Bidle was now at least out of danger, and occupied himself with renewed study of the Bible; but after something over two years his friends at last succeeded in getting him set at liberty. He at once returned to London and began

preaching again, though after a few months a change in the government led him reluctantly to retire for safety into the country, to return once more to London as soon as danger seemed past. Charles II now came to the throne, however, and a new Act of Uniformity was passed, making it a crime to hold worship except under the forms of the Church of England. Bidle therefore held his meetings in private; but they were soon spied out, and he and his friends were all dragged away to prison. He was fined what was then the large sum of one hundred pounds, and was sentenced to lie in prison until it should be paid. The prison was so foul and the confinement so close that in a month he fell dangerously ill; and although he was at length allowed to be removed to a better place, he died two days later, September 22, 1662, at the early age of forty-seven. He had, indeed, not expected to survive another imprisonment, and had been heard to say that 'the work was done.'

John Bidle was a man of the most exalted personal character, devout, reverent, and of the highest ideals of personal religion and private life; firm for the truth, as we have seen, self-forgetting, devoted to the sick and the poor. But it is not these qualities, nor even the many persecutions that he suffered, that make him important in the history of Unitarianism; it is the fact that he did so much to stir people up to examine the doctrine of the Trinity, and hence to disbelieve it. He knew his Bible from cover to cover, and he relied fully upon it for his authority; but when he came to interpret it, he looked not to tradition but to reason for his guidance. In this he was like the Socinians; and like them he held that though Christ was not God, yet he was divine, and was to be worshiped. In two notable respects, however, he differed from them; for he held to a kind of

"scriptural Trinity" of three divine persons, though denying that the three are equal or make one God; and he held that the Holy Spirit is a person, though not God.

Bidle had never sought to found a new sect, and the little congregation of his friends had slight chance of holding together long after his death. One John Knowles, indeed, who had fallen under Bidle's influence long before, and is said to have preached Arianism at Chester as early as 1650, is thought to have succeeded him for a while; but he did not long escape prison, and then the congregation probably scattered. The Rev. Thomas Emlyn also preached to a Unitarian congregation in London for a few years early in the eighteenth century;[1] and a generation later a meeting-house was built for an Arian Baptist preacher in Southwark who occupied it for more than two years. Save for these isolated instances, there was no organized Unitarian movement in England for more than a century after Bidle's death.

Bidle, indeed, like many before him in England, might have remained but another sporadic prophet of Unitarianism, had not his influence been continued in another way by the printing press, and through the efforts of one of his disciples, Thomas Firmin, of whom we have now to speak. Firmin was born at Ipswich in 1632 of a family in the Puritan wing of the Church of England. In early manhood he came up to London to engage in business life, and here he soon fell under the influence of John Goodwin,[2] an Arminian minister who converted him from his Calvinism. It was at just this time that Bidle was preaching in London. Firmin

[1] See page 331.

[2] Goodwin had lately translated Aconzio's *Stratagems of Satan* into English. See page 293.

made his acquaintance, became his devoted friend, and accepted his beliefs. He also supported him for a time at his own expense, and helped to secure from Cromwell a pension for him in exile.

Firmin was one of the leading philanthropists of his age. He became wealthy as a manufacturer and dealer in cloth, but Bidle's devotion to them roused his interest in the poor and unfortunate. When the Socinian exiles from Poland appealed to English sympathizers for relief in their distress,[1] it was Firmin that raised a fund for them by private subscriptions from his friends, and by collections which his influence caused to be taken up in the churches. He procured similar aid for the orthodox Protestants of Poland when their turn came to suffer in 1681, for Huguenot refugees from France in the same year, and for Protestant refugees from Ireland under the oppressions of James II a few years later. He did much for sufferers by the great plague in 1665, and by the great fire in London the following year; established a warehouse where coal and grain were sold to the poor at cost, and set up factories where many hundreds of them when out of work might earn their living by making linen or woollen cloth; and besides giving generously for poor relief out of his own purse, he was given very large sums by others who trusted him so fully that they never asked for an accounting. Moreover, he was a pioneer in scientific charity, for, far ahead of his time, he devised a scheme for systematic employment of the poor, and used to investigate their needs by visiting in their homes. Finally, he took an active part in the reform of prisons, in behalf of those imprisoned for debt, in the work of hospitals, and in the reform of public manners. In all these ways he

1 See page 179.

was the model for many a public-spirited Unitarian in later generations, who has like him been inspired to good works by the preaching and example of his minister.

It was Firmin's especial services to the cause of Unitarianism, however, that bring him into this history. Although he attended Bidle's services as long as they lasted, he never withdrew from the Church of England, and until his death in 1697 he maintained with Archbishop Tillotson and with most of the prominent clergy an intimate friendship, which was never broken despite his known difference from them in matters of belief. As a convinced Unitarian, however, he sought every means to spread Unitarian teachings. He is said to have had an important Polish Socinian work translated and published in English not long after Bidle's death, and to have assisted later on in bringing out a work by a liberal Anglican clergyman leading to the view that the English Church should be made so broad that a Socinian might join it.[1] He also carried on the influence of Bidle in another way, and thus kindled a fire which has never since gone out. In 1687 he got the Rev. Stephen Nye, a clergyman holding Unitarian beliefs, to prepare *A Brief History of the Unitarians, called also Socinians.* This led to controversy, and other tracts followed. These made so many converts that in 1691 Firmin, at his own expense, had these and others collected into a volume of Unitarian tracts, with Bidle's first three tracts reprinted and standing at the head. Other tracts were collected later, many or most of them written by clergymen in the Established Church, until at length there were five volumes of them, the last two published after Firmin's death. These writings stirred up the celebrated Trinitarian Controversy in the Church of England,

[1] Respectively, John Crellius's *Two Books touching One God the Father,* 1665; and Dr. Arthur Bury's *The Naked Gospel,* 1690.

of which we shall speak in the next chapter, and they made sure that the truth to which Bidle had borne such brave witness did not fall to the ground. Unitarian beliefs thus came to be widely held in both pulpit and pew in the Church of England, and that with little concealment; so that for a time it was felt that the struggle for freedom of belief in the Church was won. No one had done more to bring about this result than Thomas Firmin.

The point has now been reached where we can begin to trace two fairly distinct streams of Unitarian thought, one in the Church of England, the other among the Dissenters, which at length united about the beginning of the nineteenth century in a separately organized Unitarian movement. We shall follow these two streams in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER XXIX

UNITARIANISM SPREADS IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY, 1687–1750

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the work of Bidle for the spread of Unitarianism seemed for the most part to end with his life; for he left no organized movement, and no preacher long continued his public services. In fact, his writings, and those of one or two Unitarians in his period, though some of them called forth elaborate answers, appear to have made no particular impression on the general religious thought of England. All that he had said and written and suffered might yet have come to naught had it not been more and more reënforced by Socinian influences which kept coming over in a constant stream from Holland. The canon of the Church adopted in 1640 had forbidden all but the clergy to have or read Socinian books;' [1] and, while it was never enforced even as regards the laity, the clergy would seem to have made full use of the leave thus allowed them. The Socinian books imported were mostly in Latin, and hence affected only scholars; but the result upon the clergy was that before the end of the seventeenth century large numbers of these, including some of the most influential, had in one respect or another become decidedly influenced by Socinianism.

Moreover, during the greater part of the seventeenth cen-

[1] See page 296.

tury religious intercourse was very frequent between England and Holland. Many Englishmen went to Dutch universities to study, especially the Nonconformist candidates for the ministry, who were debarred from the English universities; and they returned some of them outright Socinians, some Arians, some with the Arminian theology of the Remonstrants, and all of them more given to the use of reason in religion, and more tolerant in spirit. Whether they came back holding Socinian doctrines, or favoring a more reasonable interpretation of Christianity, which Socinians advocated, or merely mellowed by the Socinian spirit of religious toleration, they were likely sooner or later to be accused by their conservative brethren of being Socinians; and in the controversies of the time the terms Arminian and Socinian were used as meaning much the same thing.

The result of this influence is seen in some of those most eminent in the religious life of England in the seventeenth century. Archbishop Tillotson has already been mentioned.[1] Chillingworth, the ablest reasoner in the Church of England, recognized reason as supreme, and long objected to the Athanasian Creed. Richard Baxter, the greatest of the Nonconformists, held only the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed as essential, though both Socinians and Catholics could have met these conditions. Cromwell strongly upheld religious toleration, and the Independents in general favored it. Milton was at first an Arminian, but at his death he left a manuscript (*On Christian Doctrine*, not discovered and published until 1825, and afterwards reprinted in part by the Unitarians as a tract) which shows that he had become a Unitarian in belief; so did Sir Isaac Newton; so, for a time, was William Penn, who wrote a tract to show the Trinity's

[1] See page 297.

Sandy Foundation Shaken, and was sent to the Tower for it; while the earlier teaching of the Society of Friends in general omits the doctrine of the Trinity. None of these ever joined a Unitarian movement—in fact, there was as yet none for them to join—but they were all more or less Socinian either in belief, in principle, or in spirit, and they were all reproached by the more orthodox as being Socinians unconfessed.

Perhaps the most widespread of these various Socinian influences was shown in the direction of broad toleration of difference of opinion in religion, and in the tendency to reduce the essentials of Christianity to the very fewest and most important things—a tendency which presently came to be known as Latitudinarianism. Such a principle had already been urged in Bidle's time, in an English translation of Aconzio's *Stratagems of Satan*,[1] which would have left the door of the Church so wide that men of all views might enter it. The Athanasian Creed, however, which they were bound to use in public worship thirteen times a year, kept the clergy constantly in mind of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of their obligation to believe it in its most extreme and objectionable form. Many who still believed in some sort of Trinity were far from sure they believed in all the statements of this Creed, and every use of it gave their consciences a twinge. Even Archbishop Tillotson said, "I wish we were well rid of it."

Hence a movement arose which found much favor, urging that conditions of membership in the Church be made much simpler. In 1675 Bishop Croft cautiously put forth, without his name, a book called *The Naked Truth*, urging that the Apostles' Creed, which had sufficed for the early Church, ought to be the only confession of faith required now; that

[1] See page 293.

longer creeds do nothing but harm; and that it is far better to follow the simple teaching of the Scriptures than the philosophy of the Fathers. Although this book was attacked by several writers, its views were defended by several others, and its message spread. At length after the passage of the Toleration Act in 1689, legalizing the worship of Dissenters, the king appointed a commission to revise the Book of Common Prayer. Liberal influences were strong, and it was proposed to omit the Athanasian Creed, or else to make the use of it optional, and to omit various objectionable phrases in the liturgy; but unfortunately all changes were defeated by the conservatives.[1]

On the doctrinal side Socinian influences from Holland gave rise to a yet greater controversy. The writings of Bidle, as we have seen, though attacked enough while he lived, appear not to have made any deep or general impression, and after his death public controversy about the Trinity ceased. Even in 1685, when the Rev. George Bull (later Bishop Bull), who had himself been charged with being a Socinian, sought to clear himself from suspicion of heresy, and published his elaborate *Defence of the Nicene Faith*, he made no reference to English writers, but was aiming only at some Socinian writings from Holland which had made much impression in England. He sought to prove that even the early Fathers of the Church held the belief expressed in the Nicene Creed, though he admitted that they made Christ

[1] A century later, however, when the Episcopal Church in America was revising the English Prayer Book for its own use, it adopted these changes, and omitted the Athanasian Creed. The Nicene Creed also was at first omitted, but later was restored, as otherwise no English bishop would consent to consecrate the American bishops. In the Episcopal Church of Ireland the Athanasian Creed may be used in public worship only by special permission, which has seldom been sought.

subordinate to the Father, which was the main point for which the early Socinians had contended.[1] Moreover, he wrote in Latin, and hence reached only the learned. Soon afterwards, however, a very active discussion of both sides of the question arose within the Church of England itself, which aroused keen interest in a much larger public, and continued in one form or another for a full generation.[2]

The Trinitarian Controversy, as this is commonly called, was started in 1687 by the publication of the *Brief History of the Unitarians or Socinians*[3] already referred to.[4] This tract gave an account of the Unitarians and their beliefs from the early Church down, and refuted the proof-texts usually quoted by the Trinitarians in support of their doctrine, ending with the conclusion that those holding Unitarian views of the Trinity ought not to be prosecuted for them, but should be received in the Church as brethren. This tract was soon followed by another, *Brief Notes on the Creed of St. Athanasius*, which took up the Creed clause by clause, laid bare its contradictions with itself, reason, and

[1] See page 132.

[2] How serious this controversy was may be judged from the fact that it extended, in its widest compass, from 1687 to 1734, comprised more than 300 separate writings by not fewer than 100 known writers (including several bishops and archbishops), besides many others who wrote anonymously. The whole controversy divides up into some twenty different ones, ranging round some particular writing or some minor branch of the whole question at issue.

[3] Unitarians was the name preferred by Firmin and generally used by his associates who, although they were generally called Socinians by the orthodox, and did not deny that they agreed with the Socinians on many points, yet did not accept all the Socinian doctrines. By *Unitarian* they meant, at this period, one who holds the doctrine of the Trinity in some sense which does *not* imply belief in three Gods. The name was borrowed from Transylvania by way of Holland, and first appeared in English print in 1672–73.

[4] See page 310.

Scripture, and concluded that it ought not to be retained in any Christian church.

These tracts were widely read and made a great stir among both clergy and laity; and seeing the doctrine of the Trinity thus attacked, one bishop or doctor after another now came forward to defend it. Some maintained, against the charge that the doctrine was unreasonable or self-contradictory, that it ought to be reverently accepted on faith as a sacred mystery, above human comprehension; to which was replied that this was precisely the argument which Roman Catholics had urged in behalf of some of their own most objectionable doctrines, and which Protestants had steadily refused to admit as sound. Some sought to prove that the doctrine was supported by Scripture; but in this they were all too easily confuted by the Unitarian writers. Others, appealing to antiquity, tried to show that this had been the teaching of the Christian Church from the beginning; but the Unitarians, while not unwilling to admit that belief in some sort of Trinity was at least consistent with the Bible, and was supported by the early Fathers of the Church, insisted that it was far from being the kind of Trinity so carefully defined in the Athanasian Creed. The crucial question in the controversy was as to what is meant by one God in three *persons*. When the Unitarians urged that this belief by its own words contradicts itself, some tried to remove the difficulty by explaining that *persons* means just what we usually mean by the word; but the Unitarians replied that this involves belief in three separate Gods. Others sought to show that *persons* has here a special meaning, and simply means three different modes of being or acting; but it was replied that this was the ancient heresy of Sabellianism,[1] and that *Christ* means some-

[1] See page 15.

thing more than merely God's mode of acting. So the controversy went on, with the Unitarians ever keen to detect any flaw in the reasoning of the orthodox, and ready to press every advantage against them. The controversy ended, the acute stage of it at least, when the authorities of the Church at least seemed to accept an explanation of the Trinity to which the Unitarians could assent with good conscience.

This controversy was carried on in print by published tracts, sermons, or books. Any publication on one side was promptly answered by one or several on the other. The Unitarian contributions to it kept coming out every month or so for some ten years or more. The most important of them were written by a clergyman of the Church of England, the Rev. Stephen Nye,[1] who was a friend of Firmin's. Firmin himself paid the cost of publication, and distributed them freely as a part of his plan to spread Unitarian views within the Church. The tracts seldom bore author's or publisher's name, for fear of prosecution, for the law did not tolerate deniers of the Trinity; and on one occasion in this period when one William Freeke ventured directly to attack the doctrine in a *Brief and Clear Confutation of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, Parliament condemned the book (1693) to be burnt by the common hangman as an infamous and scandalous libel, and forced the author to recant and to pay a fine of £500.

Although this controversy in its time aroused the Church of England to an intense pitch of interest, it would be tedious enough to-day to have to read through it, or even to read very much about it. Only a few of its most important events need be mentioned here. Before the controversy had fairly got under way a great stir arose in the very center

[1] See page 310.

of churchmanship at the University of Oxford, where a book appeared entitled *The Naked Gospel*,[1] (1690). It bore no name, but it was ere long discovered to have been written by Dr. Arthur Bury, Rector of Exeter College. It held that to be a Christian means simply to have faith in Christ, and that to require assent to speculations about his nature or the Trinity not only is useless but has done much harm. A heated controversy ensued which ended in Dr. Bury's book being burned as impious and heretical. At this juncture Professor John Wallis of Oxford, who had won distinction in mathematics as one of the founders of modern algebra, and was looking for new worlds to conquer, turned his attention to the hardest problem in theology. He thought the doctrine of the Trinity could be made clear by a simple illustration from mathematics. To believe in one God in three equal persons seemed to him as reasonable as to believe in a cube with three equal dimensions. The length, breadth, and height are equal; yet there are not three cubes but one cube; and if the word persons is objectionable, then say three somewhats. Dr. Wallis carried on his discussion under the form of letters to a friend, eight of them in all; but each letter exposed some fresh point for attack and brought forth a fresh Unitarian criticism, so that before he was done Wallis had been driven in his explanation of the doctrine from the orthodoxy of Athanasius to the heresy of Sabellius.

The haughty Dr. William Sherlock, soon afterwards appointed Dean of St. Paul's, now came confidently forward as champion in *A Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity* (1690), in which he undertook to demolish the arguments of the Unitarian writers and, by explaining away the contradictions and absurdities they had complained of, to make

[1] See page 310 n.

the great mystery clear to the meanest understanding by an original explanation. He was well pleased with himself for having made the notion of a Trinity, as he thought, as simple as that of one God; for he held that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons as distinct as Peter, James, and John. Pamphlets in answer came thick and fast. The Unitarians were quick to attack this new explanation of the Trinity, and to open all eyes to the fact that it was no better than tritheism; so that in the face of this new and greater danger their opponents for a time ceased to attack them. Some of the orthodox defended Sherlock's view, while others tried their hand at a better explanation.

These disputes, it must be remembered, were all between members of the Church of England, and they so much disturbed its peace that one of the bishops was moved to make an earnest plea that the whole subject be dropped. Sherlock, thinking he had won the day, refused to keep silence, but he soon found himself fiercely attacked from a new quarter as a dangerous heretic himself. Dr. Robert South, famous as a great preacher and a brilliant wit, heartily disliking Dr. Sherlock, and willing to see him humbled, published some *Animadversions upon Dr. Sherlock's Book* (1693), in which he riddled the Dean's arguments, and repeated the charge of tritheism. But in the explanation of the Trinity which he set up instead, both the Unitarians and Dr. Sherlock were quick to detect the opposite heresy of Sabellianism. Heated controversies ensued. Champions for both sides rushed into the fray with pamphlets or sermons, until at length the University of Oxford formally condemned the view held by Dr. Sherlock and his party as false, impious, and heretical; his friends fell away, and his opponents published an English translation of the life of

Valentino Gentile,[1] put to death at Bern for tritheism, recommending it on the title-page to Dr. Sherlock, with the implication that he deserved a like fate. To prevent a repetition of the scandal to the Church, the archbishop now got the king to issue directions for the clergy henceforth to abstain from unaccustomed explanations of the Trinity. Thus the controversy was finally quieted. It had revealed the fact that in place of a single orthodox explanation of the Athanasian Creed, there were now at least six distinct explanations in the field, none of them orthodox, yet all held by men who remained undisturbed in high positions in the Church.

The result was on the whole pleasing to the Unitarians in the Church; for any explanation of the Trinity as meaning belief in three Gods, to which they had most objected, had now been clearly repudiated. Although they did not relish the terms used in Dr. South's explanation, they had no mind to dispute further about mere words, feeling that they could in some sense honestly assent to the doctrine about as he had explained it. To show this, Firmin now had a new tract prepared (1697) to show *The Agreement of the Unitarians with the Catholic Church* and the Church of England in nearly all points, and concluded that their differences were well settled. However, to make sure that the view he had so striven for should not again be lost sight of, he proposed that distinct Unitarian congregations should now be gathered within the Church to emphasize the true unity of God in their worship, and to keep their members from explaining this again in the wrong way. Firmin died the following year, but this plan of his was perhaps tried for a time, since we read of Unitarian meetings with their own ministers being held in London not many years after.

[1] See page 106–109.

Finally even Dr. Sherlock took back most of the things he had said, and came to a view which the Unitarians approved. Some of the Unitarians still held out, and a tract was written to persuade them that they might now feel themselves orthodox enough for the Church; some who held orthodox views argued in another tract that they ought now to be admitted to communion; while against those that wished to have them treated as heretics the Unitarians argued in a third tract that they believed practically the same as many whose orthodoxy was not questioned, indeed, that by the standard of Scripture and the Apostles' Creed they were the most orthodox of all.[1] They seemed in fact to have grown heartily tired of the long controversy, and to have become willing to go part way in compromise in order to enjoy peace. Thus they became absorbed into the Church of England, and we hear no more of them or their movement.

The Trinitarian controversy was over a matter of doctrine. While it was still at its height a book appeared which brought the influence of Socinianism to bear in another way, by emphasizing again the importance of tolerance in religion. This was *The Reasonableness of Christianity* (1695), by John Locke. This famous philosopher, although he had read no Socinian books, had imbibed the Socinian spirit from liberal friends among the Remonstrants [2] while he lived in Holland, and had already written epoch-making *Letters on Toleration*. In his new book he urged that any one admitting the messiahship of Jesus should be considered a Christian, no matter what he believed as to other doctrines. A torrent of abuse followed from orthodox writers, especially among the Dissenters, who

[1] The Socinians of Poland had made a similar claim. See page 161.
[2] See page 200.

were now much less liberal than the Church of England. Not only was Locke charged with being a Socinian in disguise, which he denied, but it was declared that such principles as his opened the way to all irreligion, and were a fertile cause of atheism. The book was in fact quite ahead of its time. Two years later a large work on *The Blasphemous Socinian Heresie* was written by John Gailhard to urge Parliament to use all the rigors of the law against Socinians. It cited with approval a law lately passed by the Scottish Parliament, under which Thomas Aikenhead,[1] a student of but eighteen, had just been put to death (1697) for denying the Trinity—the last execution for heresy in Great Britain.

The Dissenting ministers, growing reactionary, urged King William at the same time to shut the press against Unitarians, and the House of Commons urged him that all their publications be suppressed and their authors and publishers fined. The consequence was that in 1698 there was passed the Blasphemy Act, providing among other things that any Christian convicted of denying the Trinity, etc., should be disqualified from holding any public office, and upon a second offence should lose all civil rights forever, and be imprisoned for three years. This section of the act was not repealed until 1813.

The Unitarians, who had been troubled about the proper explanation of the doctrine of the Trinity to which they were bound to subscribe, had now found elbow-room within the Church, and henceforth were little disturbed there. Still the Athanasian Creed would not down, nor would the scruples over having to use it in public worship. Hence it was not many years until new questions arose, mainly as to whether, or how, Christ was equal to God. Thus sprung

1 See page 294.

up what is sometimes known as the Arian Movement. This began through the work of two clergymen of the Church of England, William Whiston and Samuel Clarke. Whiston had succeeded Sir Isaac Newton [1] as Professor of Mathematics at the University of Cambridge. He was a man of great learning, sincere and outspoken to a fault, yet with his head full of eccentric notions. As a clergyman he was deeply interested in theological questions. Following up a hint from Clarke as to the Athanasian doctrine, he studied the origin of it, and by 1708 he became convinced by study of the early Fathers of the church that they were semi-Arian,[2] and that he must follow them. He held that though Christ was God, and existed before the world was made, supreme worship should be given only to the Father; and he set himself to restore in the Church the belief and worship of primitive Christianity. For two years by his writings and sermons he carried on an active propaganda for his view. He omitted from the liturgy such parts as did not suit his beliefs, and proposed that the Prayer Book be purified of Athanasian expressions. All this roused intense opposition; and the university, which did not wish to repeat Oxford's unhappy experience of a few years before,[3] promptly expelled him (1710). He finally withdrew from the church and joined the General Baptists; [4] but to the end of his long life he never ceased to proclaim his views, and to believe that through the or-

[1] Newton himself had already (1690) come to disbelieve the authority of the two strongest proof-texts for the doctrine of the Trinity; but shrinking from being drawn into controversy he would not let his views be published while he lived. Whiston is now best remembered for his translation of Josephus.

[2] See page 21.

[3] See page 319.

[4] See page 338, n.

ganization of societies, composed of Christians of all denominations, for promoting primitive Christianity, they would at length be brought to prevail.

Whiston's eccentricities and his early expulsion from the Church kept him from having the influence he might otherwise have had, so that the real leadership of the Arian movement soon fell to Dr. Clarke. He was already the most distinguished theologian of his time, and was admiringly spoken of as "the great Dr. Clarke"; and it was taken for granted that he might have any advancement in the church, and would in time become an archbishop. He had already suggested to Whiston that the early Fathers were not Athanasian in belief, and soon after Whiston's expulsion he undertook to investigate carefully the teaching of Scripture on the subject. In 1712 he published a book on *The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*, in which he brought together every text in the New Testament having the least bearing on the subject, some 1,250 of them in all, classified according to their teaching. From these he drew the conclusion that the Scripture doctrine is that the Father alone is the supreme God to whom supreme worship may be paid, and that Christ is subordinate to him, and is to be worshiped only as a mediator; and he intimated that the Prayer Book ought to be revised so as to correspond to this doctrine.[1] Half a score of opponents were soon in the field with tracts or books against him. Though he distinctly disowned the doctrine of Arius, it was charged that he was advocating sheer Arianism.[2] A great hue and

[1] He later drew up a scheme of revisions in the Prayer Book, which were adopted late in the century by Lindsey's Unitarian church in London, and by King's Chapel in Boston, as we shall see hereafter. See page 351.

[2] The so-called Arianism of Whiston, Clarke, and others of their time differed in several important respects from that of the fourth

cry was raised in the Church, and the matter was brought before the church authorities. Clarke weakened somewhat and made a semi-retraction, so that no further action against him was taken; but he remained under a cloud of disapproval for the rest of his life.

Nevertheless Dr. Clarke's book made a deep impression on the minds and consciences of many of the clergy. They realized that whenever they subscribed to the Articles of Religion, as they were required to do when they were ordained or were advanced to higher position in the Church, they must subscribe to what they did not wholly believe; and that whenever they conducted worship in church they must use expressions in the Prayer Book which they could no longer regard as true. Hence some of them, including Dr. Clarke himself, declined further advancement where subscription was required; while many, knowing that their bishops more or less sympathized with them, altered the words of the liturgy, and were not disturbed for it although it was contrary to law and to the promises they had made. Clarke himself had said in his book that "every person may reasonably agree to such forms, whenever he can *in any sense at all* reconcile them with Scripture." In other words, one might put upon them any sense he pleased. Many adopted this principle and subscribed with large mental reservations, defending this practice as right, and it has continued more or less down to the present day.

The Athanasian Creed had by now become a topic of general conversation, and a vigorous controversy therefore

century (see page 17), especially since they did not regard Christ as a *created* being. But in theological controversy it has been the custom to prejudice the case of an opponent by giving him whenever possible the name of a discredited heresy, whether really deserved or not. At the present time (1925) in political controversy the name Bolshevik is freely applied in the same way.

arose over this "Arian subscription," as it was called; in which Dr. Waterland very ably argued against Clarke and his followers that when one has subscribed he is morally bound to stick to the usual sense of the words as intended by the Church; and moreover, that the doctrine of the Trinity is of such supreme importance that it ought not to be held in any lax sense. But a much more serious danger was now threatening the Church, involving not merely one article of doctrine but, as it was felt, the very foundations of the Christian religion. Doctrinal controversies now faded away before that with Deism, and for half a century we hear little more of them. Thus the second attempt to reform the doctrine of the Church of England so as to make it more nearly like that of the Bible, came to nothing; and for the second time those who had desired a reform finally settled back comfortably and did nothing, content enough to be let alone as they were. We shall presently see how the inevitable question again came up in the time of Theophilus Lindsey,[1] and led to the organization of the first permanent Unitarian church in England. Meanwhile the scene shifts from the Church of England to the Dissenting churches, where the views of Clarke had a far wider and deeper influence, and led to more permanent results.

[1] See chapter xxxi.

CHAPTER XXX

UNITARIANISM SPREADS AMONG THE DISSENTING CHURCHES: THE ARIAN MOVEMENT, 1703–1750

The controversy over the doctrine of the Trinity, and the spread of Unitarian explanations of it, described in the last chapter, were wholly within the Church of England. At about the time that movement was dying out in the Church a similar one was beginning to arise among the Dissenting churches. As briefly told in an earlier chapter, ever since the time of Queen Elizabeth there had been many in England who did not feel that the reformation of the church had been carried far enough; and as they refused to conform to the appointed forms and rites of the Established Church they came to be known as Nonconformists. Some of these withdrew from the Church as early as 1616, and became known as Independents. Others, forming the Puritan party in the Church, came at length to be known as Presbyterians. During the Commonwealth the Nonconformists were in the majority, had control of the government, and had things their own way; but when the Episcopal Church was reëstablished under Charles II, an Act of Uniformity was passed (1662), forbidding any public worship except that prescribed by the Church of England.

Any minister refusing to conform was required to give up his pulpit and his living. It was a tragic decision that they were required to make. It was to involve poverty,

homelessness, fines, imprisonment, and even death, for many. The Nonconformists did not complain of the doctrines required; but they conscientiously objected to using certain forms which seemed to them Catholic superstitions, and to being re-ordained by bishops. The temptation to conform was almost irresistible; yet it was resisted by about 2,500 of the ablest, most learned, and most godly ministers of England, who with great regret left the Church forever. "But we must live," said one whose conscience was weak, and who shrank from poverty, and was about to give in. "But we must die," replied the other, remembering the account he must give to God for an undefiled conscience. The "Nonconformist conscience" became henceforth a fixed element in the moral life of England. The Act of Uniformity was reënforced by several others which made it unlawful for a Nonconformist to hold any municipal or government office, and forbade ministers to hold meetings or to come within five miles of their old churches.[1] Under these acts 60,000 are said to have suffered punishment within the twenty-seven years during which the Act of Uniformity was enforced against them; property was taken away to the value of £2,000,000; and 8,000 are said to have died in prisons. Despite all this the Nonconformists largely increased in numbers, and won great respect from the church authorities. It was out of these conscientious and heroic Nonconformists that the first Unitarian churches in England were almost entirely made up.

When the Revolution came and William and Mary ascended the throne in 1688, one of the first steps taken was to pass the Toleration Act (1689), making the worship of Dissenters (as the Nonconformists now came generally

1 Respectively, the Corporation Act, the Test Act, the Conventicle Act, and the Five Mile Act.

to be called) lawful. An effort was also made to change the forms and rules of the Church to which they objected, so that they might all be included in its membership, and that England might have one great, broad church which should include practically all Protestants. High Churchmen bitterly opposed this "scheme of comprehension," and even the Dissenters had misgivings about it. The plan fell through, and henceforth Protestant England was to be permanently divided into two great bodies. Under the Toleration Act the Dissenting congregations grew and flourished as never before; for nearly a generation of bitter persecution had only strengthened them and united them firmly together. They now built meeting-houses all over the land and worshiped openly, and by the end of the century they counted two million members, the most numerous and wealthy body of Christians in the kingdom.

The Dissenters were of three different denominations: the Presbyterians and the Independents of whom we have already spoken, and the Baptists who had succeeded the earlier Anabaptists. Besides these there were the Quakers, who kept steadily aloof from the rest, and were cordially hated by them. Of all these the Presbyterians, now at the height of their power, were about two-thirds. They had gradually grown more tolerant, and their Calvinism had lost its edge. The Independents were generally stricter in their views and narrower in their spirit. Still the two bodies were much alike, and differed more in name than in fact. Neither was so broad as the Church of England; but the Baptists were on the whole the most liberal of the three.

There was for a time some prospect that Dissenters generally might unite into one comprehensive Dissenting body over against the Church of England. In 1690 over eighty

of the Presbyterian and Independent ministers in London drew up a plan of union, and some years later the Baptists joined them. They were known as the United Protestant Dissenters; but they did not long hold together. A doctrinal controversy soon arose, and within four years they had drifted hopelessly apart again into separate denominations. The point of difference was between extreme and moderate Calvinism. As to the Trinity they were all still orthodox; though already it might be foreseen that the Presbyterians would in the end take the side of liberty. After sketching this background we are now prepared to fill in the details of the development.

The first minister among the Dissenters to attract attention for his disbelief in the Trinity was Thomas Emlyn. He was born the year after Bidle's death; and though his parents attended the Church of England, they leaned toward the Puritan party and had him educated for the ministry at a Dissenting academy. Conscience forbade him to conform to the Established Church, hence, after a few years he became minister of a small Presbyterian congregation at Lowestoft. Here he formed a friendship with a neighboring Congregational minister; and as it was at the period of the Trinitarian Controversy, they read and discussed together Sherlock's *Vindication* [1] of the doctrine. The result was that Emlyn became an Arian and his friend a Socinian. Soon afterwards he was called to Dublin as joint minister of a large Presbyterian church, which he served acceptably for eleven years. He was somewhat ill at ease over his doctrinal views, but he kept them to himself, and confined himself to practical preaching. One of his congregation, noting at length that Emlyn never preached about the Trinity, began to scent heresy. He took it upon him to ask Emlyn what

[1] See page 319.

he believed, whereupon the latter gave an open and honest answer, and said he was willing to resign if it were desired. The matter was laid before the congregation, and conference was had with the other ministers of the city. They decided that he should withdraw for a time.

The church was unwilling to accept Emlyn's resignation, but gave him leave of absence, and he went to London. In his absence he was violently attacked from the other pulpits, and on his return he felt bound to set forth and defend his views in *An Humble Inquiry into the Scripture-Account of Jesus Christ* [1] (1702). His position was much like that of Clarke: that God is supreme, so that Christ has only an inferior deity and deserves only inferior worship.[2]

Emlyn had intended to return at once to England; but before he could do so he was prosecuted at the instance of a zealous Baptist deacon, and tried for having in his book uttered an infamous and scandalous libel against Christ. His trial was carried on with great unfairness and prejudice, and resulted in conviction (1703). Refusing to retract he was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £1,000, and was reminded that he was fortunate not to have been tried in Spain, where he would have been sent to the stake. Unable to pay his exorbitant fine, he lay in prison over two years, neglected of his former friends, and visited by but one of his brother ministers; but he occupied himself in writing, and in preaching on Sundays to his fellow-

[1] This work was reprinted at Boston, 1756, the sole Unitarian work by any European writer to be reprinted in America before the rise of Unitarianism there.

[2] He described himself as "a true scriptural Trinitarian," but accepted the name Unitarian in the sense then current (see p. 316, note 3) and wrote *A Vindication of the Worship of the Lord Jesus Christ on Unitarian Principles* (1706). He was really Arian in much the same sense as Whiston and Clarke and their followers (see p. 324, 325).

prisoners. His fine was at length reduced to £70, besides £20 more which fell to the Bishop of Armagh under the law.

Emlyn was set free in 1705 and soon went to London, where he spent the rest of his life. He gathered a Dissenting congregation there, and for a number of years preached to them in Cutlers' Hall without pay. Some of the orthodox complained of him, and urged that he be again brought to trial, but no action was taken, and at length his congregation scattered. He received much sympathy in London, and was held in high honor by many both in the Church and among the Dissenters as one that had suffered more than any other man of his time for freedom of conscience. Whiston and Clarke gave him their friendship, and he was intimate with them from the beginning of the Arian movement; but except two Baptist ministers no one was brave enough to invite him to preach in his pulpit. With his pen he entered actively into the controversy still raging over the Trinity, and his writings did much to interest Dissenters in the subject, and even before Whiston and Clarke to prepare them for the Arian point of view which was soon to spread so widely among them. In the cause of religious freedom he had yet greater influence, as people of all parties reacted in disgust from the religious narrowness and the persecuting spirit shown in his trial. He was the last Dissenter to suffer imprisonment for blasphemy under the English law. Time brought its vindication. Twenty-five years after Emlyn's release from prison, his old congregation, which had fallen off from the day he left it, called a minister who inclined strongly to religious freedom, and who later became a leader of the Arian movement in the north of Ireland;[1] within a half century it had itself become Arian, and at length it came fully into the Unitarian movement.

[1] See pages 339-341.

The controversy in the Church of England over the explanation of the persons in the Trinity had made little impression on the Dissenters, and indeed only one or two of them had taken part in it; for the Athanasian Creed which kept the subject constantly before the minds of Conformists was not used in the Dissenters' worship. But the question of whether and how Christ was God, and what kind of worship should be paid to him, interested them deeply. This had been Emlyn's question, but it was brought most forcibly to their attention by the writings of Whiston and Clarke; and the so-called Arian movement which they led had much less influence in their own Church of England than among the Dissenters, by whom Clarke was widely read. It was therefore in their quarter that the next long step was to be taken toward Unitarianism, as we shall now see.

The leaders of the movement were ministers who had become liberal while preparing for the ministry. They had not been able to attend the English universities, for students in those were required to be members of the Church of England or to subscribe its Articles, which as Dissenters they could not do. Hence some of them went to Dutch universities to study, and there they were bound to come under the influence of teachers and fellow-students leavened with Socinian thought. Others attended Dissenting academies in England; for after the Nonconforming clergy had been ejected from their parishes in 1662 many of them turned to teaching; and some of the academies that thus grew up were in general subjects almost equal, and in theological and biblical teaching quite superior, to the universities, which were then at a low ebb. The academies especially insisted on free investigation of the Scriptures and on the use of reason, while they paid much less respect

to the authority of the creeds. It is little wonder, then, that many of them became seed-beds for something like Arianism.

Besides Emlyn's case in Ireland, there were a few other outbreaks of Arianism in England which attracted a little attention, and it was suspected that Arianism was secretly gaining ground to a considerable degree. It was at Exeter, however, that it was first recognized as a serious danger. The Dissenters had long been strong here, where they had several Presbyterian congregations jointly managed by a single committee. Three of the four ministers were liberal. The senior minister, who had studied in Holland, conducted an academy which had the seeds of heresy in it, for one of its students was a secret correspondent of Whiston's. Another of the ministers, James Peirce, who had also studied in Holland, and had won high standing as a champion of the Dissenters, had long been a friend of Whiston, and had accepted Clarke's view of the Trinity before settling at Exeter. Like Emlyn, he kept his opinions to himself, and preached only on practical subjects. After Peirce had preached at Exeter some years, a rumor got afloat that he and others were not sound on the Trinity, and he was asked to declare his belief. Though he protested that he was not an Arian, the beliefs he expressed were not satisfactory to the Exeter Assembly of Ministers. A violent controversy ensued. The attempt was made to compel subscription of the ministers to an orthodox statement about the Trinity. Peirce and several others refused to subscribe, holding that the ministers had no authority over one another's private opinions. At a loss what step to take next, the Assembly appealed to the Dissenting ministers of London for advice, and these met to consider the matter, as we shall soon see; but before their answer was received, the committee locked

Peirce and his colleague out of their pulpits and refused to let them preach further, and similar action was taken in several other churches of the region.

The two excluded ministers then formed a new church of their own,[1] with a large congregation, and soon built a meeting-house. Peirce, embittered by this experience, and broken in health, died a few years later,[2] but his church went on. So did the cause he had espoused, beyond all expectation, stimulated rather than hindered by what had happened. Within a generation a known Arian was called to the pulpit from which Peirce had been excluded for Arianism; he in turn was succeeded by a decided Unitarian; and in 1810 Peirce's church was reunited with the other. Many of the other churches in Devonshire moved fast and far in the same direction, and well before the end of the century Unitarianism was so far in the ascendant that even Arians were looked down on as idolaters for their worship of Christ.

What took place thus in the west of England is only an example of a similar movement among the Presbyterian and other churches of the rest of England, Wales, and Ireland, in the middle half of the eighteenth century. The movement was stimulated by the Exeter controversy. When the Exeter ministers appealed for advice to the Dissenting ministers of the three denominations in London, the latter met in assembly at Salters' Hall[3] in 1719, to the number

[1] This church, founded in 1717, may be called the earliest antitrinitarian church in England which has continued its existence down to the present day.

[2] Emlyn was called to succeed him, but was now grown too infirm to accept.

[3] After the passage of the Toleration Act over a score of the Dissenting congregations in London, instead of building new meeting-houses, for a time used for worship the handsome halls of old London guilds, whose members were almost entirely from among the Dissenters.

of a hundred and fifty. The question laid before them was whether the holding of Arian opinions by a minister was sufficient reason for withdrawing fellowship from him. As to the main question, there was general agreement; but one of the conservative ministers proposed that before a vote were taken on this question all present should first prove their orthodoxy by subscribing to the doctrine of the Trinity. Doubtless not a few of the ministers, under the influence of Emlyn and Clarke, had already come seriously to waver as to this doctrine, while yet others did not feel sure as to the future. At all events, the motion was met by determined opposition, and was lost by a small majority.

The important thing is that the debate over this question led to a permanent split between the progressive and the conservative elements among the Dissenters, not over doctrine, but over the principle of freedom in religion. At Salters' Hall in the main Presbyterians were strong against subscription, Independents strong for it, and Baptists about evenly divided; although in each of the denominations there were both orthodox believers and Arians in both camps. From this time forth for a generation the most burning question among Dissenters was the question as to subscription or non-subscription of creeds, which had first been raised at Exeter; the one party maintaining that ministers ought to be required to subscribe confessions of faith, the other that they ought to be left free. The controversy was long and heated, but the result was that within the next generation the ministers and congregations favoring subscription remained orthodox, and either conformed to the Church of England or else went over to the

Salters' Hall was one of these, used as a Presbyterian church. This assembly is often spoken of as the Salters' Hall synod, but it was not properly a synod, for it did not represent any organization of churches, and it had no authority over either churches or ministers.

Independents; while the non-subscribers of the three denominations gravitated toward the Presbyterian side and became steadily more liberal.

With required subscription to creeds now out of the way, there was little to control the Presbyterian ministers. Doctrinal changes went on rapidly among them, and their people followed them. Doctrines of the creeds found not to be in the Scriptures were first neglected, then soon disbelieved and forgotten. Disuse of the Westminster Catechism gradually became general. All through the middle of the century Arian views spread rapidly and widely; and these in their turn led to Unitarian views. In less than two generations from the Salters' Hall controversy practically all the churches that still kept the Presbyterian name had abandoned the Trinitarian faith; and from this source came nearly all the oldest churches which later organized together in the English Unitarian movement of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the eighteenth century these liberal Presbyterian churches far outstripped the rest of the Dissenters in the ability and scholarship of their ministers, in the culture, wealth, and social influence of their members, and in public life and public service; but they were not effectively organized, and they made little new growth in numbers or strength.

Another liberal drift, very similar to that among the Presbyterians, was going on independently at about the same time among the General Baptists.[1] A generation before the case of Peirce at Exeter an attempt, several times repeated, had been made to exclude from Baptist fellowship a min-

[1] The Baptists, who had come together into an organized denomination in England early in the seventeenth century, had split up in 1633 into Particular Baptists, who were the smaller sect and strict Calvinists, and General Baptists, who were more numerous and more liberal in spirit and progressive in doctrine.

ister whose views were more or less Unitarian. Though the Assembly disapproved his views, they refused to exclude him, thus declaring for liberty of belief. The orthodox minority thereupon seceded for a time; but the denomination steadily grew more liberal in belief, and most of its churches, like the Presbyterians and not a few of the liberal Independents, eventually joined the Unitarian movement.

The discussion begun at Salters' Hall was not long in spreading to the Presbyterians in Wales and Ireland. In Wales Calvinism had begun to decay early in the eighteenth century, giving way first to Arminian and then to Arian views. The movement, as had been the case in England, was stimulated by a Dissenting academy at Carmarthen, which was now supported largely by Presbyterian funds from London. Before the middle of the century many of its students, doubtless influenced by the writings of Emlyn and Clarke, had become Arian, and from that time on their views rapidly spread. As in England, nearly all the old Presbyterian as well as several General Baptist congregations gave up their belief in the Trinity; and as Arianism faded away Unitarianism succeeded it, and many new churches of that faith were founded. In Cardiganshire they were so numerous that the orthodox gave vent to their feelings over the situation by naming that region "the black spot." The number of Welsh Unitarian congregations to-day is between thirty and forty.

In Scotland liberal influences were felt at the universities, and spread thence into Ireland, whence many young men had come to study for the ministry; but though there were for a time several sporadic movements toward the end of the century, Unitarianism in any form did not take firm root until well on in the nineteenth century.

In the north of Ireland Presbyterianism had been organ-

ized among the inhabitants of Scotch origin (the Scotch-Irish) in 1642, and subscription to creeds had never been required. But after Emlyn's trial, and while he was still in prison, in order to guard against the spread of his beliefs in northern Ireland, it was voted in 1705, in face of strong opposition, to require subscription to the Westminster Confession from all ministers seeking ordination.[1] The Rev. John Abernethy, who had just declined a call to succeed Emlyn at the Dublin church, now settled at Antrim, and soon gathered about him an association of ministers. Meeting together during some years they came to agree in opposing subscription, and to take open ground against it. In the controversy that followed for six or seven years they were named the "New Lights," and this name clung to the Irish and Scotch liberals for a full century.[2] Friction between them and the orthodox increased so much that in 1725 the synod set the non-subscribers apart into a Presbytery of Antrim by themselves, and the next year excluded them from the synod altogether, the ministers in the synod being nearly equally divided, but the elders strongly conservative. It was suspected that many of the non-subscribers were inclined to Arianism; but the issue here was precisely what it had been at Salters' Hall.

This victory of the orthodox did little to stop the spread of heresy. Many of the ministers in the Synod of Ulster remained out of sympathy with required subscription, and the feeling against it steadily grew. In the course of the century the practice of subscribing gradually decayed or was evaded more and more even among the orthodox. Arian

[1] In the very next year Calvin's old church at Geneva took the opposite step, and abolished subscription.

[2] Their influence was much felt in the Church of Scotland at the beginning of the nineteenth century. See Robert Burns's "Kirk's Alarm."

views spread correspondingly; and after the law against deniers of the Trinity was repealed in 1817, Unitarian doctrines began to be preached openly. This at length roused the orthodox into action, and after a bitter controversy it was again voted in 1828 to insist upon subscription. The non-subscribers then withdrew and in 1830 formed a Remonstrant synod, suffering considerable persecution in consequence. Presbyterian churches had always been very few in the south of Ireland, but a similar movement went on in the churches there. To anticipate here, and bring the story down to the present day, it may be added that in 1907 the various bodies of Unitarians in the north of Ireland united to form the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, which though Presbyterian in name and form of government is Unitarian in belief, and is associated with the Unitarian churches of Great Britain. The number of congregations is about forty.

We have now reached the point where in the third quarter of the eighteenth century a large number of the Dissenting ministers and churches of Great Britain and Ireland had become practically Unitarian. They were no longer bound to accept a particular creed, they had come to a generous tolerance of differences of belief, they had left the doctrine of the Trinity behind, and they were coming to accept the full humanity of Jesus. Still their movement in this direction had been so slow and gradual that they hardly realized how far they had come, or whither they were bound. They were but a loosely connected group of churches, and they had taken no definite step to show just what they stood for; they were conscious of no common body of doctrine; they had no recognized leader or common rallying-point; and they had no clear vision or plan for the future. They were like a stream that has broadened out until it is likely to

sink into the ground and be lost unless it can be led together again into a well marked channel. In short, they needed a leader and a spokesman, and a name and a recognized cause to rally about. In the fullness of time these two needs were now to be supplied, in the persons of the two men of whom the next two chapters will speak.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE UNITARIAN REVOLT FROM THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: THEOPHILUS LINDSEY ORGANIZES THE FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH, 1750–1808

In the last two chapters we have followed two separate streams of Unitarianism gathering volume, one in the Church of England, the other among the Dissenters. They were to a large degree independent of each other, for the Church and Dissent had, as they still have, little to do with each other. In this and the next chapter we are to find these two streams flowing together and making a channel of their own, which will issue in an organized Unitarian body. We have seen that the ministers in the Church of England who felt ill at ease using the Prayer Book or the Athanasian Creed most of them settled down at last into using these as they found them, but putting their own interpretations on them. After all, this sorely troubled the consciences of those who desired in religion above all things else to be and seem perfectly sincere, and for a generation or more they tried in various ways to get around a difficulty which they had been unable to remove. The Athanasian Creed was their worst stumbling-block.

While the more timid kept their thoughts to themselves, others made no secret of them. Several altered the liturgy, and left it to the bishops to take action against them if they thought best. Some got the parish clerk to read

for them parts of the service which they were unwilling to read themselves. Some omitted the creed altogether, and suffered prosecution in the ecclesiastical courts for doing so; and when one of these was ordered to restore it to its place in the service, he put it to ridicule by having it sung to the tune of a popular hunting song. Yet another, when he came to the creed, said, "Brethren, this is the creed of St. Athanasius, and God forbid it should be the creed of any other man." Several of the bishops themselves were unsound as to the Trinity, and sympathizing with these evasions did nothing to prevent them; but the situation was notorious, and did nothing to raise the liberal clergy in public respect.[1] Their behavior was in sad contrast to that of the 2,500 non-conforming clergy who in 1662 had given up all worldly prospects [2] for a similar principle of conscience. It seemed as though sensitive conscience had deserted from the Church to Dissent.

The liberal Dissenters took note of all this, and when the Bishop of Oxford complained of the low state of religion, one of them taking up the subject in a book reminded him 'that among the causes of the prevalent skepticism his Lordship had forgotten that the clergy themselves solemnly subscribed to Articles they did not believe.' Of all the clergy at this time only one, William Robertson of Ireland, "the father of Unitarian Nonconformity," followed his conscience so far as to abandon flattering prospects and, when well beyond middle life, at great cost to himself to resign from the ministry (1764).

Though the controversy following Dr. Clarke's book had

[1] A prominent clergyman who was in a position to know as well as any one, declared that not over a fifth of the clergy subscribed in the strict sense.

[2] See page 329.

largely died out,[1] all through the middle of the eighteenth century books or pamphlets kept appearing from time to time (almost always anonymously), urging that the terms of subscription should be relaxed, and thus preparing the way for a further move. For it must be remembered that all candidates for ordination or advancement in the ministry were required by law to subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion and all things in the liturgy of the Church of England, and that similar tests were imposed on admission or graduation at the universities. The feeling back of all these writings at length found its full expression in one of the most important books in the religious life of eighteenth century England, a book entitled *The Confessional*, published anonymously (1766) by the Rev. Francis Blackburne, Archdeacon of Cleveland.

The author was a sincere and earnest man, who spent nearly fifty years as rector of one parish, at Richmond in Yorkshire. It was only a few years after his ordination, that the book appeared which led Robertson to resign his charge and it roused grave questionings also in Blackburne's mind, so that it was only after serious misgivings that he was persuaded to subscribe when he was made archdeacon the next year, and he never would subscribe again after that. He gradually grew bolder in his thought, sent his son to school at an Arian academy, and cultivated friendship with Dr. Priestley, who was now becoming a leader among the non-subscribing Dissenters. He printed one or two minor things on the subject so much on his mind, and petitioned the archbishop for reforms in the Church; but no visible notice was taken. He therefore began collecting materials for a convincing work on the subject.

Blackburne was apparently the same sort of Arian as Dr.

[1] See page 327.

Clarke; and in his book he discussed at length the history of subscription and the arguments for it, and argued powerfully that Protestant churches have no right to set up creeds composed by men, in place of the Word of God, as tests of the orthodoxy of ministers, and that subscription ought at once to be abolished as a mischievous stumbling-block. The book caused great excitement among the conservatives, who took the view that the Church could not serve its purpose, but would fall to pieces, unless all its members believed alike. The archbishop soon spied out the authorship of the book, and a controversy ensued which ran to a hundred pamphlets and books. Though there was great clamor against the book and its writer, it won many converts, and made a deep impression, and it led at length to an organized movement to get relief from subscription, which had the support of even one or two of the bishops.

It was some years before the movement took definite shape; but in 1771 Blackburne, who was recognized as the leader in the cause, was induced to draw up some proposals for an appeal to Parliament for relief from subscription to the liturgy and Articles, and these were widely circulated. In the face of much discouragement from those in high station, and of timid lukewarmness in others, a meeting was held at the Feathers' Tavern in London, where a petition to Parliament was drawn up. Though this Feathers' Tavern Petition, as it was called, was circulated for half a year, only about two hundred and fifty signatures could be obtained. Most of the clergy who sympathized with the petition dared not give it their support for fear of consequences to themselves. The Rev. William Paley, who afterwards became famous as a theologian, unblushingly said what others doubtless felt, when he declined to sign the petition because 'he could not afford to keep a conscience.'

The petition was presented to Parliament early in 1772, and very ably supported by its friends, but as bitterly opposed not only by orthodox Churchmen, but by the Methodists as well. It was urged that it would destroy the Church and disturb the peace of the country; and after an eight hours' debate Parliament by a majority of three to one refused to receive the petition. A similar attempt two years later met the same fate, as did also an attempt the same year to get the Articles and the liturgy revised through petition to the archbishop.

So the movement died out, and those that had supported it slumped back and, even if they declined advancement and refused to sign the articles again, continued to say the creed and use the liturgy just as before, and kept on disbelieving them just as before.[1] Of all that had signed the Feathers' Tavern Petition, the most are so wholly forgotten that it is not easy even to discover their names. The only one that ever made any real mark on the religious thought of the time following was one Theophilus Lindsey, who now withdrew from the Church. We have next to follow the

[1] The Feathers' Tavern Petition was brought up in Parliament again in 1774 and decisively rejected, and the situation remained quite unchanged down to 1865, when the terms of subscription were altered so that now one must assent only to "the Articles" (instead of "all and every the Articles") and the Book of Common Prayer, and believe the doctrine therein set forth to be agreeable to the Word of God. Some deem this an important change and a great relief to conscience; others see no great difference. In 1867 an effort was made to have the Athanasian Creed removed from the service of the Church. The High Churchmen opposed the movement, and threatened to leave the Church if any change were made. The creed is still retained, and must be used thirteen times a year, though evasion of the full requirement is often practiced, and as often winked at. In 1858 tests for matriculation for the bachelor's degree were abolished at Oxford, and conditions had been relaxed at Cambridge two years before. All university tests were abolished by Gladstone's government in 1871.

story of his life, for he became the founder of the Unitarian Church in England.

Theophilus Lindsey, the youngest son of a business man of Scotch origin, was born at Middlewich, Cheshire, in 1723. He showed good promise in boyhood, and thus attracted the attention of some ladies who provided for his education. In due time he went up to the University of Cambridge, where he was known for his high character and firm principles, was graduated with honors, and was made a Fellow. Flattering inducements were offered him to embrace the life of a scholar, but he deliberately chose the ministry as the calling where he could best serve God and do the most good to men. He was ordained minister in the Church of England, and soon became private chaplain in the family of a nobleman, and in this service he spent some years in travel on the continent. He then became minister of a modest parish in Yorkshire, near to Richmond, where he soon formed an intimate friendship with Archdeacon Blackburne, with whose views he had much in common. After three years he was persuaded by friends to accept a parish in Dorsetshire, where he proved a most faithful and devoted minister to the members of his flock.

He stayed there seven years, giving himself much to the study of Scripture and its doctrines, and in consequence came to entertain serious doubts as to the rightfulness of offering to Christ the worship which the liturgy required. He even thought seriously of resigning from his ministry altogether; but he was reluctant to abandon his chosen life work, and to take such an almost unprecedented step; and as he knew that many others who believed as he did remained in the Church, he made the usual excuses to himself, and managed for a time to quiet his conscience by explaining the doctrine of the Trinity in the way then common.

Meantime he married the step-daughter of Blackburne; but though he was offered a place in Ireland which would no doubt soon have led him to a bishopric, he declined the honor, and instead chose to go where the scenes and the people were dear to them both. He accordingly returned to Yorkshire in 1763 and settled over the parish of Catterick.

His new post gave him a smaller salary than the one he had left, but a greater opportunity of doing good; for there was a large number of poor people in it. He took up his new work with such enthusiasm that people said he had turned Methodist. He and his wife spent much of their time, and all the spare means that a most self-denying life afforded, in trying to improve the condition of the poor, and supplying them with nursing, medicine, food, and books, and so trying to make them feel the practical influence of the Christian religion. He devoted himself especially to young people, and in 1763 established one of the first Sunday schools in England for religious instruction.

Happy as he was in his work, however, one thing made Lindsey uneasy. He had been not a little troubled about subscribing the Articles when he settled at Catterick, and had determined that he would never subscribe again, but would stay there for the rest of his life. But he was far more troubled that whenever he used the Prayer Book he had to offer worship to Christ and the Holy Spirit, instead of to God alone as the Bible taught. While in this state of mind he had the fortune to spend several days at Blackburne's house in the company of two non-subscribing Presbyterian ministers. One of these was Dr. Priestley, who had already become a convinced Unitarian, and was minister at Leeds, and was destined later to be recognized along with Lindsey as one of the two founders of the Unitarian Church in England. Lindsey told him how uneasy he felt, and that

he had thoughts of resigning his charge. Priestley advised him to stay where he was, try to make the church broader, and alter the things in the Prayer Book which troubled him, waiting for the bishop to turn him out if he chose. But Lindsey remembered that he had solemnly promised to use the liturgy as it was, and whenever he remembered that Robertson had resigned for a similar reason, he felt reproached of conscience. He threw himself more deeply than ever into his work among the poor, and into the preaching of practical sermons, and made no secret of his views, but all to no purpose.

It was at this time that the Feathers' Tavern movement took place. Though Lindsey had little expectation that anything would come of it, he grasped at it as one last straw, and went into the movement with great earnestness. Two thousand miles he traveled through snow and rain that winter trying to get signatures to the petition. He met with lukewarmness, timidity, even with abuse; but he got few signatures. Stimulated by the example of Robertson, and of the ejected clergy of a century before, he determined that if the petition failed he would resign. It failed, as we have seen; and without waiting for the attempt to be renewed he prepared to take the critical step. He had first to see his parishioners through a severe epidemic of smallpox which afflicted many of them. Then he took Blackburne and other friends into his confidence, hardly one of whom but tried to dissuade him; but he was unshakable. At length, after preparing for publication a full and careful *Apology for Resigning the Vicarage of Catterick*, he wrote a tender and affectionate *Farewell Address* to his people, preached his last sermon to them, and at the beginning of winter "went out, not knowing whither he went." He had laid up nothing for a rainy day, having spent all his sur-

plus on the poor of his parish; and after selling all but the most precious of his worldly possessions he had but £50 to face the world with, and an income of only £20 a year in sight.

It will be hard for us to realize what it can have meant for a man of fifty, frail in health, thus to give up his comfortable living and face a totally unknown future. Most of his former friends now fell away from him and treated him coldly, as either a traitor to religion or else a visionary fool. The Feathers' Tavern petitioners protested that his resignation would ruin their cause. So strained became relations with Archdeacon Blackburne that for several years he refused to see the Lindseys. Hardly one of his friends offered him any help in his time of need, though one of her wealthy relations offered to provide for Mrs. Lindsey, if she would abandon her husband. Such a proposal she indignantly rejected, for she fully sympathized with him, and was ready without complaint to bear any sacrifices that might come. Outside the Church friends were kinder. One of them offered to recommend him to a very influential Dissenting congregation at Liverpool. Another offered him an opening to teach in a Dissenting academy. A third offered him a handsome salary as librarian. All these offers he declined because he had planned, if possible, to gather in London a congregation of others like himself (he was confident there must be a great many of them), who loved the worship of the Church of England, but wished to see important changes made in its liturgy.

On his way up to London Lindsey visited several friends, and at the house of one of them he saw the alterations which Dr. Clarke had proposed in the liturgy.[1] This gave him light, and he copied them that he might publish a re-

[1] See page 325 n.

formed Prayer Book for the use of his new congregation. Arrived at London, Lindsey took humble lodgings in two scantily furnished rooms, where he soon fell into such want that the family plate had to be sold to pay for food and lodging. On the other hand he enjoyed such peace from a good conscience as he had not known for years, and he began to draw up his reformed liturgy. Friends soon found him out, learned of his plan, and encouraged him in it. Unexpectedly few, indeed, from the Church of England; but there was Dr. Priestley, who was now a celebrated man and had influential connections, and Dr. Price also prominent among the liberal Dissenters. These and others helped to raise funds, a vacant auction-room in Essex Street was rented and fitted up for worship, and on April 17, 1774, was opened the Essex Street Chapel, the first place in England that came to anything, which was avowedly intended for the worship of God on Unitarian principles.[1] Firmin's plan[2] was at length realized in a way, although Lindsey was disappointed to find that very few adherents of his movement, and only one gift for it, came from members of the Church; nor did many follow his example in resigning from its ministry. About a dozen clergymen resigned within a few years, but

[1] The earlier short-lived meetings of Bidle, Emlyn and others are not to be forgotten in this connection, nor is Peirce's Arian movement at Exeter. It is true that not a few of the old Presbyterian congregations had before now outgrown their Arianism and become Unitarian in belief, but they were not yet so in name. Lindsey adopted the Unitarian doctrine without reserve, and gave the word a new definition. By it he meant "that religious worship is to be addressed only to the One true God, the Father," implying therefore the pure humanity of Jesus. The orthodox did not like to admit the right of Unitarians to appropriate the name, claiming that they too believed in the unity of God; and for a long time they insisted on naming the Unitarians Socinians. But the name chosen by Lindsey spread and has survived, and the other has passed out of use.

[2] See page 321.

only two or three of these took up the Unitarian ministry, and only an occasional one has done so down to this day.

Officers of the government were suspicious of the new chapel, and there was delay in getting it legally registered as a place of worship. Not only was it still against the law to deny the Trinity, but political radicalism was feared, and for several Sundays an agent of the government was present to report whether the law were violated. He found nothing to complain of. Lindsey declared his intention not to engage in religious controversy; and the worship was much like that of the Church of England, save that the minister wore no surplice, and that the revised Prayer Book made many doctrinal omissions and some other changes. At the first service about two hundred were present, including one lord, several clergy of the Church of England, Dr. Priestley, and Dr. Benjamin Franklin, who was then in London in the interest of the American colonies, and was a regular attendant until he returned home. The congregations grew, and in them were found members of the nobility, members of Parliament, men prominent in public life, well-known scientists, and people of wealth who were generous to the cause. In fact, malicious tongues set afloat the rumor that Lindsey had resigned from Catterick with pecuniary ends in view! The chapel became too small to hold those that came, so that after four years the premises were bought and a new chapel and minister's dwelling were built.[1]

From now on all went smoothly. As his work grew and his age increased, Lindsey sought a colleague. It was some

[1] The Essex Street congregation worshiped here until 1886, when they removed to a more suitable location in Kensington. Since then Essex Hall has been headquarters for organized Unitarianism in England.

years before one could be found; but in 1783 Dr. Disney, who had married another daughter of Archdeacon Blackburne, and had also been one of the Feathers' Tavern Association, withdrew from the Church and came to assist Lindsey at Essex Street Chapel. Lindsey had already published several writings since coming to London; for he had found himself forced to break his original resolution as to religious controversy, and to answer attacks and argue in defense of the beliefs he held. Now that he had a colleague he gave himself more than ever to writing. One of the most important of his later works was his *Historical View* of Unitarianism (1783), which helped his followers to realize that instead of being a new and insignificant sect, they were part of a movement nearly as old as Protestantism, which had had distinguished adherents in half a dozen countries for two centuries and a half. He also wrote a defense of his dear friend, Dr. Priestley, who was now being bitterly attacked, as well as two books on the true belief about Christ, the prevalent worship of whom he boldly attacked as no better than "Christian idolatry." He steadily grew clearer and firmer in his departure from orthodoxy, not a little influenced in this by the fearless attitude of Dr. Priestley. At seventy, though still in full vigor, he realized that his public work must be nearly done, and therefore resigned his pulpit, which he would never consent to enter again.

Lindsey lived fifteen years after his retirement, in a serene and very happy old age. He published one more book, showing his deep faith in the universal goodness of God, and was always ready with his counsel and with material aid for the cause he loved. He was a moving spirit in the first two societies which were the beginning of organized Unitarianism in England, and before he died he had the happiness of knowing that his views had spread widely in the British

Isles and in France, and that the oldest Episcopal church in New England (King's Chapel, Boston) had followed his example and revised its Prayer Book after the pattern of Dr. Clarke.

Lindsey was not a popular preacher who drew great crowds, but his sincerity and earnestness, his rare strength of character, and his unselfishness deeply impressed those that knew him. Though he lived at a period when they were uppermost in most minds, he would not discuss political questions in his pulpit; but outside it he took an active part in working for broader civil and religious liberty, and against slavery. Like his friends, Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price,[1] he was very liberal in politics, and warmly sympathized with the American colonies (as did the Dissenters almost universally), and with the French Revolution in its early days as an uprising against despotic tyranny. His influence on the development of the Unitarian movement, though much more quiet than Priestley's, was very great. As we have seen, it did not much affect the Church of England, and in this his hopes were disappointed; for those who should have followed his example preferred, when the pinch came, to stay where they were, whatever it might cost them in twinges of conscience. But to some of the liberal Dissenters, who had gradually drifted into Unitarian views without ever having confessed the Unitarian name, and who thus occupied an equivocal position, his bold, uncompromising, and successful example gave the courage of their convictions. Encouraged also by the advice of their acknowledged leader, Priestley, they now began openly to adopt

[1] Dr. Richard Price was, after Priestley, the most famous of the liberal Dissenters. He was a noted mathematician, and wrote important works on finance, politics, and philosophy, and on the war with America. His view of Christ was Arian and was strongly opposed by Dr. Priestley, but their friendship was of the warmest.

the Unitarian name, until not long after Lindsey's death nearly a score of these churches could be numbered, and their organization into one body went steadily on. We must now turn to see how these churches were led in this definite direction by Priestley.

CHAPTER XXXII

THE LIBERAL DISSENTING CHURCHES BECOME OPENLY UNITARIAN UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, 1750–1804

We have seen in a previous chapter how the Presbyterian churches rapidly became liberal after the division at Salters' Hall. The movement among them might be described as a "liberal drift," for it was not a concerted movement with either program or leaders. No one was particularly trying or wishing to form a new denomination, or to re-form an old one. There were many able men among their ministers, but only two or three stand out above the rest for the influence they had in bringing about a change of beliefs. One of the earliest of these was Dr. John Taylor of Norwich, who in 1740 published a work on Original Sin which powerfully attacked the orthodox doctrine on that subject, and not only had great influence in England, but also did much to root out this doctrine in New England. Another was Dr. Richard Price [1] one of the leading Dissenting ministers in the London district, and a strong friend of the American colonies at the time of their Revolution, who helped undermine the orthodox beliefs by his printed sermons on the nature of Christ (1786), in which he strongly defended the Arian view. But by far the most influential of

[1] See note, page 355.

those that led the Presbyterians to acknowledge Unitarian beliefs was Joseph Priestley.

Priestley was in many ways the polar opposite of Lindsey. He was an extreme Dissenter, while Lindsey was by temper a devoted Churchman. He was a clear-thinking rationalist, while Lindsey was a man of fervent spiritual religion. Priestley welcomed religious controversy as a way of clearing up the truth, while Lindsey shrank from it. Priestley devoted his spare time and thought to science, Lindsey gave his spare time and money to charity and work among the poor. Yet they were united in close bonds of rare friendship for over a generation.

Joseph Priestley was born at a little village near Leeds in 1773, the eldest son of a cloth-maker. When he was six years old his mother died, and he was brought up by an aunt. She was a deeply religious woman, and having brought him up in the strictest religious habits in the Independent Church she encouraged him to become a minister. Being never very robust he was the more serious-minded and diligent in his studies, and early in his teens had learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and he eventually became master of half a score of foreign languages. Although brought up a strict Calvinist, he early showed an independent mind, and when he sought to join the church he was refused admission because he could not say he believed he shared the guilt of Adam's sin. Nor would he enter the academy in London where it was proposed to send him, for he had now become an Arminian in belief, and could not sign the creed which was set before the students twice a year to keep them straight in the faith. So he went to a new academy at Daventry, where he was enrolled as its first student, and there began his studies for the ministry. Very free discussion of both sides of all questions was encouraged here,

and as he found himself taking the liberal side of almost every question he soon had become an Arian.

His studies finished, Priestley accepted the first call that came to him, and became minister of a Presbyterian congregation at a little village in Suffolk, with a salary of but £30 a year, refusing an extra stipend which he might have had had he been willing to subscribe a creed, and trying to eke out this scanty salary by teaching. He set to work with great industry in his church and in the prosecution of further studies; for he was an incessant worker, methodical in his use of time, and never allowing a moment to go to waste, and throughout his long life he seldom lost an hour of work through illness. Results were not encouraging. He was hindered by an inherited tendency to stammer, which made him a poor public speaker; but worse than that, he was steadily moving further and further from orthodoxy, dropping one belief after another; and as they discovered this, members of his congregation gradually fell away from his services and withdrew their support until he was often in want, and was hardly able to keep out of debt. He was glad therefore after three years to accept a call to a more liberal congregation at Nantwich in Cheshire. The congregation was small but sympathetic; and as it made no great demands on him, he was able to supplement his meager salary again by teaching from seven to seven, with no holidays. Hard as this labor was, he much enjoyed it, and was able to buy some books and scientific apparatus; and he found time to write a book on theology, and an English grammar on an original plan.

The reputation he made by his teaching at Nantwich led to his appointment, after three years, as teacher of languages at Warrington, in a new Dissenting academy where all three of the teachers were Arians. Here he spent six

happy years, in which he published several works growing out of his teaching, one of which led the University of Edinburgh to make him a Doctor of Laws. In this period he also met Dr. Franklin in London, and with his encouragement wrote a *History of Electricity*, and he was soon afterwards elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, which later gave him the supreme honor of its gold medal for his discoveries in chemistry.

While at Warrington, Priestley continued to preach, having by very patient practice somewhat overcome his habit of stammering; and as his teaching was bringing him only the barest living, he accepted in 1767 a call to the Mill Hill Chapel at Leeds, the largest Dissenting congregation in the north of England, where he spent the next six years. Happy to be doing again the work of his first choice, he threw himself into it with great energy, was diligent in preaching, in visiting his people, in instructing the young, and in organizing the congregation. Finding many of the liberal Dissenters slipping away to the Methodists, whose movement was then sweeping over England, he wrote a tract appealing to them to be true to their convictions and not let themselves be carried away by popular emotion. Thirty thousand copies of this tract were circulated, and together with others had a great effect in arousing loyalty. He also continued his studies in theology, and published several new volumes on the subject; and now giving up Arianism he became a full-fledged Unitarian, believing in the simple humanity of Jesus, a doctrine which until now had been professed by very few in England. It was in this period that he first met Lindsey and gave him his sympathy.

For recreation in leisure hours Priestley continued his experiments in electricity, and began important experiments

in the chemistry of the air which led him later to the discovery of oxygen,[1] and thus made him one of the founders of modern chemistry, and one of the most distinguished scientific men of his age. The fame he thus won brought him a proposal to accompany Captain Cook as astronomer on his second voyage around the world; but as some clergymen of influence opposed him on account of his religious views, the appointment was denied him. Soon afterwards, however, when he was offered a position as literary companion to Lord Shelburne, with a large salary, and much freedom to pursue his studies in theology and his experiments in science, the conditions were too attractive to resist. He continued in this position for seven years. Traveling on the Continent with his lordship he was received with high honor by the scientific men of Paris. They generally professed to be atheists, while he did not hesitate to declare his belief in Christianity; whereupon some of them told him he was the only person of sense they had ever met who professed to believe in the Christian religion. He continued his scientific studies, published more volumes on theology or philosophy, and when in London saw much of Lindsey and gave him great help in his new work. The war with the American colonies was now going on, and Priestley's sympathy with them was undisguised, while his patron's sympathies were on the other side. Priestley therefore resigned his position in 1780, and as he was soon called to be one of the ministers of the New Meeting at Birmingham he again returned to the pulpit.

Now began the happiest and most influential period of Priestley's life, though it was to end in tragedy. He was the

1 In the course of these experiments he invented carbonated water, and thus deserves to be remembered with gratitude by any one who on a hot summer's day enjoys a glass of "soda water."

most liberal of the Dissenting ministers, and the New Meeting was the most liberal congregation in England, so that they suited each other well. It was a famous church, containing not a few distinguished men. It was agreed that he might devote himself to studies and writing during the week, and serve the church only on Sundays, while his colleague was to have the care of the parish. He performed his part of the duties faithfully, preaching mornings, and in the afternoon teaching or catechizing his young people, sometimes as many as a hundred and fifty of them, taken in three or four classes one after another. He continued his experiments in science, and also got deeper and deeper into theology, publishing two of his most elaborate and important works, *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* [1] (1782), and *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ* (1786). Previous writers had generally stopped with trying to show that the early church was not Trinitarian but Arian. In these works Priestley contended that the earliest belief about Christ was purely Unitarian, and that the doctrines which arose later came of the corrupting influence of pagan philosophy upon Christian thought. He insisted that the orthodox worship of Christ was sheer idolatry, and that Arianism was little better.

These writings brought down upon him bitter and even vicious attacks, especially from Archdeacon Horsley, with whom a controversy went on for some eight years. Priestley's great fame as a scientist had drawn much attention to his theological works, and it was feared that they might have disastrous effects upon the clergy. Horsley therefore sought, by magnifying certain incidental errors into which too hasty writing had led Priestley, to prevent such a result by discrediting him as a competent authority

[1] Ordered burnt by the common hangman at Dort, Holland, 1785.

in theology, and as perhaps even dishonest, and on this ground he excused himself from attempting to answer Priestley's main argument. So far as the Church of England was concerned, Horsley succeeded in his purpose, for but a handful left the Church to follow Priestley; but with the liberal Dissenters Priestley's prestige was immensely increased. Each year he would publish a volume of *Defences of Unitarianism* to meet the attacks that were being made on them; and as he was the first powerful champion they had had since open speaking became safe, they rallied to his standard, while he in turn powerfully molded their thought and confirmed them in their beliefs.

Eleven years, the happiest and most fruitful of his life, Priestley lived in Birmingham. Sundays he devotedly served his church; weekdays he spent in studying and writing on theological subjects, or in his scientific experiments. Meantime clouds were beginning to gather over his head. His bold and repeated attacks on the Trinity made many converts to Unitarianism, and prevented many others from slipping over to the Church of England, and his church grew rapidly. The clergy of the town, who from the first had shown much bigotry towards him, began violently to abuse him from their pulpits and in print, calling him infidel, atheist, and no better than the Devil himself; but he defended himself ably, and showed much better spirit than his opponents.

Yet fiercer opposition came upon him when he championed the cause of the Dissenters in their effort before Parliament to have the Test and Corporation Acts [1] repealed. These laws, passed more than a century before, were designed to exclude Dissenters from all offices in the municipal and national governments; and although they had now long

[1] See page 329.

lain unenforced or suspended or evaded, so that prosecution under them had become practically unknown, Dissenters held office only under humiliating conditions, and with the knowledge that at any time the rigor of the law might fall upon them. For more than half a century now no attempt had been made to have them repealed; but as Dissenters had not long since been relieved of subscription to the Articles of Religion, and the government was believed to be liberal, it was felt that the time was ripe for them to agitate for full rights. The orthodox Dissenters did little about it, but the liberals took up the movement actively, with Priestley as their ablest and most active champion.

The High Church party opposed the movement with the greatest bitterness. Taking advantage of the known sympathy of Priestley and other liberal Dissenters with the French Revolution, which had lately overthrown the most corrupt state and church in Europe, but had now begun to run into dangerous excesses, they used every means to make it appear that church and state were also in peril in England, and that the real purpose of the Dissenters was to overthrow the Church of England and dethrone the king, and that Priestley and his followers were really conspirators and traitors in disguise. The petition to Parliament was defeated thrice in succession, and the attempt was for the time abandoned,[1] but the High Church party would not be appeased. Edmund Burke by his writings and his speeches in Parliament, and the clergy throughout the kingdom, tried to inflame the minds of the people against Priestley. Attacks upon him in Birmingham, and upon other Dissenters elsewhere, were made with fresh fury. Meantime the Revolution in France had got out of hand and was running into

[1] The Acts were not finally repealed until 1828, though in Ireland the Test Act was repealed in 1780.

widespread violence and bloodshed, so that many conservatives in England were honestly nervous with anxiety lest revolution should cross the Channel. Every means was therefore used to fill the popular mind with the notion that Dissenters were dangerous radicals who were plotting treason.

At last in 1791, on a date decided on beforehand,[1] the train which had been carefully laid was fired at Birmingham. A drunken mob of several thousand was gathered from the lower classes, with minds poisoned and inflamed by the High Church clergy and their party. They burnt Priestley's and another Dissenting meeting-house, plundered his library, scattered his manuscripts, the labor of years, destroyed his scientific apparatus, burnt his house, and would gladly have murdered him, but that he was warned just in time and barely escaped with his life. "Church and King" was their slogan, as if to overawe and discipline conspirators against the Constitution and government of England; but their real motive was religious bigotry against Dissenters in general, and in particular against the Unitarians and their leader, Dr. Priestley. Three days and nights the mob raged and pillaged, with no serious attempt made to control them until soldiers were sent from a distance. A hundred or more houses, and several meeting-houses, were burnt, torn down, or sacked, practically all of them belonging to liberal Dissenters, whose property loss was a quarter of a million pounds.

The High Church party openly exulted over the lesson they had taught to show the Dissenters their place, and the clergyman who had done most to stir up the trouble was

[1] July 14, when the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, as the beginning of the French Revolution, was to be observed by meetings of liberals in many parts of England.

soon afterwards rewarded by being made a bishop. Out of several thousand rioters fewer than twenty were finally put to trial, and the trial was a farce. Only six, known to be desperate criminals anyway, were convicted, and of these two escaped punishment. The victims of the mob recovered at law but little more than half of their losses.

Deep sympathy was shown Priestley from many quarters, and money was sent him by many friends. Addresses of sympathy poured in on him from many societies in England, France and America. The French voted him a citizen of their new republic, and appointed him to a seat in their National Assembly; but at home religious bigotry continued to do its work against him. He never found it safe to return to Birmingham; but he sent back, to be read from the ruins of his meeting-house, a sermon on the text, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Going to London, he was soon chosen minister of the church at Hackney, to succeed his friend Dr. Price who had lately died. Here he preached for some three years, also teaching theology in a liberal college near by, and happy in the frequent society of his dearest friend, Lindsey.

Yet even in London, life was made almost intolerable for him. He could scarcely get a house to live in, nor could his wife get a servant. Shunned by his former friends, and threatened by his enemies, he knew not at what hour some new charge of sedition might be trumped up against him, and he be sent into exile a prisoner, as had already happened to one of his friends. His sons had already been driven from their positions and had emigrated to America. Thither he followed them in 1794. He was received with distinction at New York and Philadelphia, and at length joined his sons at Northumberland, a new settlement on the Susquehanna. Here he spent the last ten

years of his life, happy in the freedom of the New World, though even here he was calumniated from the pulpit and in the newspapers. In his new life he continued as of old to study, carried on his scientific experiments, and published books in defense of his views of religion to the very last. Winters he would go into Philadelphia where he often preached or lectured, and formed congenial friendship not only with scientists and scholars, but with eminent statesmen like Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, as he had previously done with Franklin in England. He died in 1804.

Priestley was an extraordinary man, for the variety of his interests and the vast amount of work he acccomplished apart from his ministry. Not counting his scientific writings, his works fill twenty-five large volumes, and cover a wide range of subjects. The world at large remembers him as a great pioneer of modern chemistry, and as almost the most famous scientist of his time; but to him the study of science was only an incidental recreation. Far more than this he loved theological study, and his chief delight was to propagate Unitarianism. Of all subjects in the world he regarded religion as by far the most important; and his favorite occupation was the work of the Christian ministry, which he declared to be the most important, useful, and honorable of all professions. He was a man of the most devout personal religion, and of unshakable trust in God; and despite all his sufferings he never wavered in his faith that God had ordered all for the best.

Priestley's theology was a singular combination of some views that even now seem pretty advanced, and that quite shocked the Unitarians of his own time when they were first expressed, and of others that liberal thinkers have long since left far behind. He denied the miraculous birth of Jesus, and believed that he was born at Nazareth, with

the same physical, mental, and moral imperfections as other human beings, and that his character was only gradually formed and improved. At the same time he believed the miracles to be literally true, and attached to them the greatest importance as the very foundation of Christianity. He also looked for the literal fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, and expected the second coming of Christ; and although he believed that the soul is a function of the body and dies with it, he believed that God will at the last day restore each soul to life by its own miraculous resurrection.

Whatever he believed he preached out boldly and without apology or hesitation, defending and urging his views ably and fearlessly. This was in marked contrast with the practice of most preachers of his time, who were timid in speaking out what they thought, for fear lest the old law against blasphemy be revived. The example of this intrepid champion of free thought and free speech put courage into the hearts of the liberal Dissenters. He did much to break down Arianism among them; and as he boldly proclaimed Unitarian views and adopted the Unitarian name, and urged that the liberal Dissenting churches ought to accept it, many of them did so. He assisted in the formation of the earliest organizations for bringing the scattered and disunited liberal churches together for common effort. As their most active spokesman and writer he helped them to realize what they stood for as contrasted with the Church of England or the orthodox Dissenters. Thus he roused the slumbering body of English Unitarianism into active life, infused spirit and conviction into its members, and together with Lindsey deserves to be regarded as one of the two modern founders of the movement that exists to-day; the organization and life of which, during the nineteenth century, remains to be spoken of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIII

ENGLISH UNITARIANISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Although our story of the Unitarian movement in England has already covered more than a century and a half since its first definite beginnings with Bidle, it has not yet reached any organized body of Unitarian churches. It has been a story on the one hand of a struggle for life in face of constant danger of oppression by the laws of the land, and of bitter opposition in the religious circles of both churchmen and Dissenters; and on the other hand of the steady deepening of a clear religious conviction that would not be crushed by oppression nor driven from the field by opposition. The nineteenth century brings us a happier story, in which we find the old persecuting laws against Unitarians abolished, civil rights won by them after long struggle, religious opposition to them losing much of its bitterness, and the movement becoming organized for effective service as a recognized part of the religious life of England.

Three leaders stand out above all others in bringing this organization about. In the last two chapters we have spoken of two of these, of whom Priestley came from the liberal Dissenters, and Lindsey from the Church of England. The third member of the triumvirate came from yet a third source, the orthodox Dissenters, and was the first of them to resign an important position for conscience' sake and join the Unitarians. His name was Thomas Bel-

sham, and his great work was to lead in organizing the disunited Unitarian congregations into a denomination that could act effectively for its cause, and to continue Priestley's work as the organizer of its thought, its public spokesman, and its champion against attacks.

Belsham was born at Bedford in 1750, the son of a Dissenting minister, and being designed for the ministry he was sent for his education to the academy at Daventry, where Priestley had studied a generation before him. In due time he entered the Independent (Congregational) ministry, but although preaching more or less he was for nearly twenty years chiefly occupied as teacher in the academy. He was earnestly orthodox, though open-minded, examining both sides of questions and encouraging his pupils to do the same. So it came to pass that he first drifted from strict Trinitarianism to the Arian views of Dr. Clarke, and later while studying Unitarian writings with the purpose of confuting them, felt driven to accept Unitarianism himself, and adopted views much the same as those of Priestley. He therefore resigned his very important position as principal of the academy in 1789 and confessed his views at a time when, as he said, "a Socinian is still a sort of monster in the world."

Lindsey's resignation had had only a limited effect among the Dissenters, but the example of Belsham, who had been held in great honor among them, had much influence in encouraging them frankly to profess their liberal beliefs. Although he had resigned without other prospects in view, he was soon chosen teacher in the Unitarian academy at Hackney, where he was happy in intimate association with Lindsey, and later with Priestley; and when Priestley removed to America, Belsham succeeded him as one of the ministers of the Unitarian church. At length in 1805, upon

the resignation of Dr. Disney, who had succeeded Lindsey at Essex Street Chapel, Belsham was called to that important pulpit. Here he preached until his death in 1829, winning great popularity and fame as a powerful preacher both on theology and on questions of the day, so that he soon came to be regarded, from both his abilities and his position, as the leader of those holding Unitarian views.

A timid attempt had been made as early as 1783 to get the Unitarians to act together through a *Society for Promoting Knowledge of the Scriptures*, though it never flourished, and it accomplished nothing more than to publish a liberal commentary; but the society was not denominational, for there was as yet no denomination for it to belong to. Belsham, however, earnest with the zeal of a fresh convert, proposed that some positive action be now taken to organize the scattered liberal forces for spreading Unitarian views. He was heartily seconded by Lindsey and Priestley, and thus in 1791 was formed the *Unitarian Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue by the Distribution of Books* (briefly called the Unitarian Society, or Unitarian Book Society). Belsham was not willing that the publications of the society should give any uncertain sound, and as he regarded the worship of Christ as sheer idolatry he drew up the constitution so as expressly to exclude Arians from membership. Some of them objected to this provision, but the result of this and other causes was that within a generation Arianism was pretty well eliminated from the Unitarian movement. The Arians had never organized as such, and from now on, though some of them went back to orthodoxy, more and more of them accepted the strictly Unitarian views of Priestley and Belsham, until worship of Christ finally disappeared among the Unitarians.

This Unitarian Society of London proved so successful that it was soon followed by similar ones in each of the four quarters of the kingdom, and these in turn by many local tract societies. These all had an important influence in drawing the scattered liberal Presbyterian and General Baptist churches together in a common effort and sympathy, and in encouraging them to take the Unitarian name and support the Unitarian cause. It gave them the confidence and sense of united strength that is inspired by a common standard; and this had indeed become quite necessary for self-preservation in face of orthodox opposition. Many important books and tracts were published and circulated, especially by the Book Society. Most noted among these was an *Improved Version of the New Testament* (1808). In this work Belsham took the leading part. It made many corrections in the text, and anticipated many of the changes later made in the Revised Version. It was accompanied by many notes on points involved in the Unitarian controversy, and although it was most bitterly attacked by the orthodox, it long served the Unitarians as an arsenal of scripture weapons.

Many Unitarians of the day shrank from active public efforts for their cause for fear lest laws still sleeping on the statute-books should be roused against them, and some of them therefore opposed even the founding of the Book Society. Many others felt that this organization would surely suffice, for when men once had the Unitarian argument in print and read it, orthodoxy must silently and surely be undermined within a few years. Converts came, but too slowly. Not all would read, and not all who read were converted. Many remained whom the printed books, sermons, tracts, and periodicals did not reach. It was seen that unless Unitarians were to rest content to have their

lamp hidden under a bushel, personal missionary preaching needed to be done. One Richard Wright, a General Baptist preacher of humble origin, who had become converted to Unitarian views, had for fourteen years traveled about the north and east of England as a voluntary missionary of Unitarianism, and he found a ready hearing for his doctrine among the common people.

At about the same time David Eaton, a Baptist layman of York, made the great discovery of Unitarianism, and believed that instead of remaining merely on the defensive, Unitarians ought to be as aggressive and as zealous for spreading their gospel by popular preaching as were the orthodox. He began to do lay preaching himself, and continued to do so for many years, persistently agitating the while for the forming of a Unitarian missionary society. It was objected that the time was not ripe, that Unitarianism was not a religion for the common people, that orthodox opposition and perhaps even civil persecution would be stirred up, that lay preaching among the Methodists had run to scandalous excess and brought religion into ridicule. Lindsey, however, and some others sympathized with the idea, which gradually won approval; and after eight years of effort by Eaton there was founded in 1806 the *Unitarian Fund for Promoting Unitarianism by means of Popular Preaching* (briefly called the Unitarian Fund). It was designed to aid poor Unitarian congregations, to support Unitarian missionaries, and to assist ministers who had suffered on account of becoming Unitarians.

The missionary spirit now spread all over the country, and many local auxiliary societies were formed. Those who believed that Unitarianism would be acceptable only to the educated and wealthy of the upper classes discovered their serious mistake. Richard Wright was sent into the field

as missionary, and for years he traveled on foot all over England and Scotland, undergoing much hardship, meeting many exciting adventures, preaching in kitchens, barns, market-places, or open fields, wherever he could get people together, like a Unitarian Wesley. He thus preached in every county and every large town in England and Scotland, and in many villages, won multitudes of converts, founded many Unitarian congregations of humble people, and strengthened many weak congregations already existing.

While Wright was spreading his message broadcast, a popular Methodist preacher in northeast Lancashire, Joseph Cooke, came to hold heretical views, and was therefore expelled from his church in 1806. He became the founder of Unitarian Methodism in that district, and about a dozen Unitarian Methodist churches resulted, which for some years had lay preachers and their own association, but at length were absorbed into the general Unitarian body under settled pastors.

The missionary wave also flowed north into Scotland. There had already been a liberal stir there in the second half of the eighteenth century, as Robert Burns reveals in his "Kirk's Alarm," but Presbyterianism was strictly organized there, and liberalism was held well in check. A Unitarian church was, however, founded in Edinburgh in 1776, and one at Montrose in 1782, and later one in Dundee, by the Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer, who also preached in various other towns. But the movement was cut short when Palmer, who had joined in an agitation for political reform, got caught in the back-wash of political conservatism and was sentenced for sedition to seven years' penal servitude at Botany Bay, whence returning home he was shipwrecked and perished on the way. In 1811, however, a strong per-

manent movement was established in Glasgow, and the first Unitarian church building in Scotland was erected.

The organization of the Unitarian Fund brought new spirit into the old churches, and by its successful missionary work soon surpassed the modest influence of the Book Society. Closed churches were re-opened, weak ones were aided, more missionaries were sent into the field, and plans were made even for work in foreign lands. The results of these efforts were so widespread and the gains made were so rapid that whereas at the beginning of the century the Unitarians had been despised for their weakness, within less than twenty years they had become respected for their strength, and were viewed with alarm for the inroads they were making upon orthodoxy.

In all this new movement Belsham played an active part. He was an able organizer, and had an eloquent voice and a powerful pen. Though naturally disliking controversy, when he felt bound to go into it he showed himself a doughty antagonist, whose blows smarted and stung, and his biting sarcasm did not spare even a bishop who deserved it. His clear handling of questions in controversy with the Church of England did much to prevent defections to it from the Dissenting churches. He ably vindicated Priestley and Lindsey from attacks made on them after they were dead, and in his more than fifty published writings he clearly stated and powerfully defended the Unitarian doctrines. Unitarianism meant to him a very clear and definite thing: the belief in one God in one person only, who alone may be worshiped; and in Christ as in all respects a human being, whose miracles and resurrection prove him to be the chosen Messiah. Where timid Unitarians had hardly dared confess this belief, he proclaimed it boldly, and thus inspired them with boldness in standing by their convictions.

The open progress of Unitarianism at this period was not a little stimulated and encouraged in 1813 by the repeal of the part of the Blasphemy Act affecting them.[1] This law, which had been on the statute book since 1698, making Unitarians liable to loss of civil rights and to imprisonment, had from the first been practically a dead letter, and the crown had of late forbidden prosecutions under it; yet there was always a haunting possibility that it might again be enforced. An unsuccessful attempt had been made to get it repealed in 1792, but that was too near the time of the Birmingham riots for any concessions to be made to liberal Dissenters. Now, however, the repeal was accomplished without opposition, under the leadership of William Smith (grandfather of Florence Nightingale), a stanch Unitarian who had long been the champion of the rights of Dissenters before Parliament.

Unitarians might now, after a century and a half, enjoy freedom of worship as a legal right, instead of having it merely winked at; but there were yet other rights to win before they had all those to which they should be entitled in a free country, and events soon showed them the need of carrying their struggle still further. For old laws still subjected them to various petty annoyances, and their property rights were endangered. The rapid progress they had made since the beginning of the century, and the vigorous speech of some of them in their attacks upon the orthodox system, had roused among some of the orthodox a spirit of intense antagonism against them, which only waited for an opportunity to make reprisals.

The first clear sign of trouble from this quarter was shown at Wolverhampton, near Birmingham. The Presbyterian

[1] See page 289.

church which had existed there since late in the seventeenth century had, like so many others, gradually grown liberal, and was now frankly Unitarian, though still occupying the chapel built by an orthodox generation. In 1816 its minister announced that he had become a Trinitarian, whereupon an attempt was made to force his resignation. Much bitterness of feeling and action developed both for and against him. The orthodox took his part, and the next year went into court and sought to get the church property taken out of the hands of the Unitarians, on the ground that it had been intended only for orthodox worship. The suit was stubbornly fought on both sides and dragged on for many years; for it was realized that if the Unitarians lost this chapel they might also lose the greater number of all they occupied. Indeed, there were rumors of proceedings to this end being already started in various places.

Their previous organizations had had only missionary ends in view; but it was now seen by the Unitarians that they must organize to defend their common interests at law. Hence in 1819 was founded yet another society, the *Association for the Protection of the Civil Rights of Unitarians.* This was designed not only to defend their property rights but in various other ways to secure for them fuller civil rights; for there still seemed to be a possibility that bigots might have them prosecuted under the common law for blasphemy; while the Test and Corporation Acts still made it illegal for any Dissenters to hold public office.[1] Further grievances were that marriage might be performed only by clergymen of the Established Church; births, marriages, and deaths might be legally recorded only in the parish registers of that church; Dissenters might not be buried in parish

[1] See page 329 n.

cemeteries except with the service of the Established Church; and they were excluded from the universities and were taxed to support the Established Church.

Although the Unitarians had long taken the lead in defending the public interests of the Dissenters, there were signs that from the orthodox they might now expect opposition rather than support of their own claims, so that they must needs act independently in their own behalf. The struggle for full equality of rights was long and hard fought. That for repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts lasted for over ninety years, and it was not until the fifth attempt in Parliament that they were finally repealed in 1828. The other rights were then secured one after another until last of all in 1871 all tests for degrees or fellowship were abolished at the universities.

In time it came to be realized that the common interests of Unitarians could be promoted by a single comprehensive organization better than by several separate ones, and such an organization was urged from 1819 on, until at length in 1825 was formed the *British and Foreign Unitarian Association*, which at once, absorbed the Civil Rights Association and the Unitarian Fund, and a year later the Book Society. From this time on, English Unitarianism, now efficiently organized, entered upon more effective work and greater activity as a denomination. Missionary enterprises were pushed with increased vigor. The Rev. George Harris during twenty years carried on an aggressive mission in the north of England and in Scotland. In Glasgow he drew immense audiences and won great prominence for the Unitarian faith, while elsewhere in Scotland he had over forty preaching stations, and was known by the orthodox as "the Devil's chaplain." Foreign work was also undertaken. Communication had already been established in

1822 with the Unitarians of Transylvania,[1] and it has been kept up to this day. Churches were organized at Gibraltar (1830) and at Paris (1831), and a missionary sent to India (1831) established a church and school at Madras.

Such aggressive life aroused orthodox hostility at home, and bitter attacks were made on the Unitarians, and resulted in some notable controversies, in which the Unitarians generally acted on the defensive, replying to attacks made on them, appealing to Scripture for support of their doctrine, and trying as far as possible to keep the discussion within the bounds of courtesy. Great public interest was taken in some of these discussions, which took place in various parts of the country. Thus Belsham in London had maintained the Unitarian doctrine of Christ; Dr. Lant Carpenter at Bristol had defended the Unitarian doctrine of the atonement and the *Improved Version* (1820) against the unfair attacks of Dr. (later Archbishop) Magee; the Rev. James Yates at Glasgow had defended Unitarianism (1815–1817) against the attacks of the Rev. Ralph Wardlaw in a controversy which filled four or five volumes; the Rev. John Scott Porter held at Belfast (1834) a four days' public debate on Unitarianism with the Rev. Dr. Bagot; while the three Unitarian ministers at Liverpool in thirteen sermons ably defended their doctrines against the massed attack made on them by thirteen clergymen of the Church of England (1839). These controversies indicate how dangerous the orthodox thought Unitarianism was becoming, and they not only won some Unitarian converts, but did yet more to rally the Unitarians themselves to their cause, and to confirm them in their faith.

The most serious of these controversies in its results upon

[1] See page 270.

the Unitarian movement was one which arose at Manchester in 1824. At a public dinner of the Unitarian congregation one of the speakers made some remarks upon orthodoxy which were reported in the newspaper and were indignantly resented by the orthodox, who at length determined to retaliate in a way that would not easily be forgotten. Ever since the beginning of the Wolverhampton Chapel case they had been casting envious eyes on the Unitarian properties, and waiting for the time to come when these might be seized by process of law. Sectarian zeal now stirred them up to carry out their design, in a law case which became very famous.

One Dame Sarah Hewley of the Presbyterian congregation at York had in 1704 and later left certain trust funds to found charities for "poor and godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel" and others. As the Presbyterian churches grew more liberal these funds had gradually drifted into the hands of Unitarian trustees, and the income had to a considerable degree been used for the support of Unitarian ministers. The Independents now set about to get control of these funds, and in 1830 brought suit to have the Unitarian trustees removed, maintaining that Unitarians had no right to the use of the old Presbyterian properties, since these had been originally intended for orthodox use at a time when Unitarianism was illegal. The Unitarians maintained on the other hand that as no orthodox limitations had been specified none was intended. The case was stubbornly fought, and appealed from court to court, the decisions running steadily against the Unitarians, until finally it was decided by the House of Lords in 1842 that no trust might now be used for any purpose which was illegal at the time when the trust was established. The Unitarian trustees were therefore removed, and the trust

was placed in the hands of trustees from the three orthodox Dissenting denominations.

The decision of the Lady Hewley case, as it was called, formed the most critical day in the history of English Unitarianism. The Wolverhampton Chapel case, which had been held back awaiting the decision of the Lady Hewley case, was now decided in accordance with it. The Unitarians lost their chapel there, but as it eventually fell into the hands of the Church of England, the orthodox Dissenters got no benefit of it.

While these cases were pending in England, similar litigation in Ireland had deprived the Unitarians of a chapel and a fund there; other suits were in progress, and there was danger that they might lose all their chapels in Ulster. No further suit had yet been brought in England, but as the orthodox had declared their intention of attacking all the old Presbyterian chapels and endowments, two or three hundred lawsuits were in prospect or talked of, and there was acute danger lest over two hundred chapels which the Unitarians had occupied for three or four generations, together with the churchyards where their dead were buried, and their schools and charitable funds, should be taken from them, and only a score or so of mostly small churches be left to them.

It was realized that no escape from their fate could be had except through a special act of Parliament. The government was therefore induced to bring in the "Dissenters' Chapels Bill," in 1844, which provided that congregations should henceforth remain undisturbed in the possession of chapels which they had occupied for twenty-five years. The bill was strenuously opposed and petitioned against by most of the Bishops, and by the Congregationalists, Methodists, and orthodox Baptists; but other peti-

tions were made in favor of it, and it received the powerful support of the government of Sir Robert Peel, and of Lord John Russell, Lord Macaulay, and Gladstone, and was carried by about three to one, to the great indignation of its orthodox opponents.

The bitterly fought contests which had now dragged on through the courts for years so greatly aggravated any previous unfriendly feeling between Unitarians and orthodox that in 1836 all but one of the Unitarians, who for over a century had as Presbyterians belonged to the organization of Dissenting ministers in London, felt bound in self-respect to protest against the action of the orthodox majority by withdrawing from the union. Thus the last bond was severed that held together the three wings of the old Dissent.

This long struggle of nearly thirty years had so much absorbed the interest and the energies of the young denomination that its progress had been much slowed down for nearly a generation; yet some gains had been made, as when an influential group of liberal Presbyterian churches in Ireland joined the movement.[1] And now the passage of the Dissenters' Chapels Act opened the door for new hope, confidence, and zeal in the churches, which after a few years began to be shown in various ways; for from 1844 dates a new era. A new fund was raised to replace the lost Lady Hewley Fund; new missionary societies were founded; and although some small village churches were lost, many new congregations were established, especially in the large manufacturing towns of the north, and in London. Old congregations increased in size; new chapels were built and old ones repaired; churches were planted in the colonies;

[1] See page 341.

a new divinity school [1] was established; work was undertaken among the poor of the large cities. A second group of Methodists in the north of England joined the denomination, followers of the Rev. Joseph Barker, who in 1841 had been expelled from the Methodist New Connexion for heresy.

While these external struggles and changes were going on, the denomination was also ripening its inner spirit and settling its thought. Priestley and Belsham, who for half a century had led the thought and greatly influenced the religious life of the denomination, while men of deep and sincere personal religion themselves, were led to lay their greatest emphasis on matters of belief and on opposition to orthodoxy; and in consequence the cultivation of the religious feelings had been much neglected. Their religion seemed more of the head than of the heart, and many of the churches of their followers were deemed cold and unspiritual. This defect was early realized, and before the nineteenth century was a third gone the influence of Channing coming from America began to lead English Unitarians in another direction; while the subsiding of the controversy with orthodoxy soon after left the Unitarians more free than they had ever yet been to develop and nourish an independent religious life.

The leader in this change of spirit was James Martineau,[2]

[1] The Unitarian Home Missionary Board (later named College) at Manchester, 1854, now the Unitarian College of Manchester.

[2] James Martineau, born at Norwich 1805, was educated as a civil engineer, but to the great blessing of his church and of religion in his time he soon changed his career and prepared for the ministry. He preached at Dublin, 1828–1832, at Liverpool, 1832–1857, where he bore the leading part in the celebrated controversy over Unitarianism in 1839 (see page 379), and in London, 1859–1872. At the same time he was professor in the divinity school then known as Manchester New College 1840–1885 (Principal from 1869). He published several vol-

who began as a follower of Priestley, but after coming to give religion a different interpretation, was for forty-five years the teacher of many of the most influential ministers of the denomination and the molder of their thought. Under his guidance English Unitarians gave up their slavish reliance on texts of Scripture, and aimed first of all to have their beliefs reasonable; they ceased to attach importance to miracles, even if they continued to believe in them; and they came to regard Christ as wholly a man, and Arianism became practically extinct among them. Some regarded these changes with alarm, and in 1865 an attempt was made to set up a Unitarian creed to keep such developments from going further; but the attempt was defeated. In 1867 also Martineau attempted through a *Free Christian Union* to draw together liberal spirits in the various religious bodies; but the orthodox would have little to do with it, and it was short-lived. A like attempt made by some liberal Congregationalists at the Congregational Union meeting in 1871, to open the way for association between them and the Unitarians, was defeated by a large majority, and has not since been renewed.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the history of English Unitarians has been one of wholesome and steady, though slow and uneventful progress. It has lost in some directions, but gained more in others. Minor organizations have grown up to supplement the work of the national Association, in most cases taking advantage of the experience of American organizations formed a few years earlier.

umes of memorable sermons, and some great works on theology, and was the most eminent Unitarian theologian of the nineteenth century. Celebrated alike as preacher, thinker, and teacher, and honored by the universities of five countries, he laid Christians of all denominations under obligation for his able support of their common Christian faith. He died in London in 1900.

Unitarians have borne an influential and honorable part in the life of the nation. Far out of proportion to their numbers they have been represented in Parliament, and distinguished in liberal politics, social reform, philanthropies, education, science, and literature.[1] Besides the burdens common to all Dissenters, they have had to bear the additional one of being opposed by all the orthodox Dissenters. If this double burden has somewhat retarded their progress, it has on the other hand intensified their loyalty to their cause. The beginning of the twentieth century found them consisting of about 360 churches in the British Isles, and about a dozen more in the colonies—a number since then somewhat increased. They have long since ceased to entertain their youthful hopes that within a generation or two all England must see the truth as they see it; but on the other hand it is realized more clearly than ever that they have a distinct contribution to make to the religious life of England, without which that life would be poorer. They are doing their part intelligently and earnestly, and they look forward to a future of steady growth and of ever greater usefulness to Christian civilization.

[1] Besides persons mentioned in the text it may be enough to mention these distinguished English Unitarians: Sir Charles Lyell the geologist; Sir William Jones the orientalist; William Roscoe the historian; Josiah Wedgwood the potter; Sir John Bowring the statesman; Professor W. S. Jevons the logician; David Ricardo the economist; Erasmus Darwin the scientist; Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Gaskell and Maria Edgeworth, women of letters; John Pounds, founder of ragged schools; Florence Nightingale and Mary Carpenter, philanthropists.

DIVISION VI

UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE BEGINNINGS OF UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA, 1750–1805

Thus far we have followed the story of the Unitarian movement on the Continent from its organized beginnings about 1565, and in England from the gathering of the first avowedly Unitarian church in 1774. The movement in America, however, did not begin to take a form distinct from orthodoxy until something like two centuries and a half after the first antitrinitarian churches were organized in Poland and Transylvania, and not until well over forty years after Lindsey began to preach in London. It would be natural to expect, therefore, that American Unitarianism would as a matter of course prove to be simply an outgrowth of these earlier movements across the Atlantic; yet this does not appear to have been the case.

It is true that two Polish Socinians are said to have been among the earliest immigrants from England to the new colony of Georgia;[1] but no trace has been discovered of them or of their influence there. In fact, the only American church in which anything like direct Socinian influence may have been felt is one organized in 1803 on the frontier of the wilderness in central New York,[2] by two liberal exiles from Holland—a church which later on adhered to the

1 About 1738. See page 190.

2 At Oldenbarnevelt (later Trenton, now Barneveld), by the Rev. Francis A. van der Kemp and Col. A. G. Mappa.

Unitarian movement. No Socinian books were in the libraries of Harvard or Yale before the nineteenth century, and there is almost no evidence that such books reached America at all until the Unitarian movement had become well launched here.

Nor, close as was the connection between the mother country and the colonies, was American Unitarianism to any large extent an importation of that in England. Though the Episcopal King's Chapel in Boston had followed Lindsey's example in revising its Prayer Book in 1785, and though Priestley soon after his arrival in America had organized two Unitarian churches of the English sort in Pennsylvania, yet the liberal American churches shrank from going as far as these had gone, and were little influenced by them. Only one English antitrinitarian work was reprinted in America in the eighteenth century, and that was the only mildly Arian *Humble Inquiry* by Emlyn. Few if any English Unitarian books were in the Harvard library before 1800, and the works of Priestley and Lindsey were as yet read only by the most daring; for, as we shall see, few of the New England clergy had any sympathy with their views. The roots of American Unitarianism go much further back into English religious history; so that the English and the American movement are related to each other not as mother and daughter, but as aunt and niece, since both trace descent from a common English ancestry early in the eighteenth century. This, however, is not to deny that the aunt had some influence in finally shaping the character of the niece.

The Unitarian movement in America, then, was largely native to American soil; and as the Socinianism of Poland and the Unitarianism of Transylvania sprang up in the Reformed churches, and as English Unitarianism first de-

veloped mainly in the Presbyterian churches, so in New England it was in the Congregational churches that American Unitarianism first arose. Indeed, many of the older Unitarian churches of Massachusetts still retain their original Congregational name.

These New England churches had had a twofold origin. The Pilgrim church at Plymouth and its neighbors in that colony were Separatists.[1] Their earliest members had sojourned in Holland when Socinianism was just coming to make some impression there, and they must have imbibed some of the Dutch spirit of religious toleration; and while they would doubtless have opposed Socinian doctrines with heart and soul, yet from their first settlement in 1620 they showed a tolerant spirit which made progress easy when the time should be ripe. The churches of Boston, Salem, and the Massachusetts Bay Colony in general, on the other hand, were founded by Puritans of the period when the Puritan party still remained within the Church of England. Yet the great distance from the mother country practically forced these churches too to enter a separate existence almost from the start, and thus the churches of both colonies were Congregational by 1629.

The belief of these churches, was Calvinism of the strictest sort, and it was long before the slightest tendency toward Unitarian views could have been detected. For many years only church members had the right to vote, and heresy laws, aimed, however, at Catholics and Episcopalians, Baptists and Quakers, existed until the time of the American Revolution.[2] In fact, universal belief in the doc-

1 See page 287.

2 The Colony of Virginia made Unitarianism a capital crime; and while Lord Baltimore in 1634 tolerated Protestants in general in Maryland, Unitarians there were legally punishable with death.

trines of the Westminster Confession was so much taken for granted that it was not demanded even upon joining the church, and members were usually admitted upon assenting to a simple, undogmatic covenant, or promise to lead a Christian life. The covenant of the church at Salem, the first Congregational church to be formed in America, may serve as an example: "We covenant with the Lord, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his ways, according as he is pleased to reveal himself unto us in his blessed word of truth." The result was that when the old beliefs gradually fell away, it was not necessary for the churches to make any change. The same covenant could still be used as before, and in some of the churches it is used to this day; while in many of them the change was so gradual that it is impossible to say just when they ceased to be orthodox and became Unitarian. It was not until heresies became a source of real danger that creeds were imposed upon members, in order to keep the churches pure in doctrine.

Strict in belief as the churches had been, they were not able long to keep their first intensity of faith. Within a generation beliefs began to grow lax, as some of the early liberal books from England were received and read, and as people compared the teachings of Calvin with those of the Bible. Thus in 1650 William Pynchon, one of the founders of Springfield, published a little book protesting against Calvin's doctrine of the atonement. The General Court was scandalized, and ordered that the book be burned in the market place at Boston, and that a refutation be published by one of the ministers. Pynchon was called to account and, though he may have escaped the heavy fine imposed, he soon afterwards thought it safer to return to England. A little later it was complained that there were

Arminians and Arians in the colony. Calvinism was beginning to break down.

It was not until the eighteenth century, however, that the matter began to look serious. Echoes of the controversies in the Church of England [1] over the doctrine of the Trinity were reaching Massachusetts, and the works of Sherlock and South, Whiston and Clarke, Tillotson and Emlyn found many readers, and influenced not a few. The Arian controversy at Exeter and in Ireland [2] was also heard of with solemn apprehension. Cotton Mather, leader of the Puritan clergy, lamented that Whiston and Clarke were being so much read; and the North Church at Boston took measures to guard its pulpit from Arminians, Arians, and Socinians. Two of the clergy were suspected, and charged with being unsound on the Trinity or the atonement. Graduates at Harvard proposed to prove that the Trinity is not taught in the Old Testament, and appeared to have the sympathy of the faculty. English Arians were in correspondence with the Massachusetts clergy, and their books and views kept slowly spreading. Sermons of the time were often in defense of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, or the doctrines of Calvin, which were considered in danger. "Arminianism" was found to be in the air—a vague term, applied to any manner of departure from strict Calvinism; and before 1750 over thirty ministers were known as having become unsound in the faith.

A little before the middle of the eighteenth century occurred a religious movement which caused the beginning of a split in the churches. The Great Awakening, one of the most remarkable revivals of religion in Christian history, began in western Massachusetts under the preaching of the

[1] See Chapter XXIX.

[2] See pages 335 f., 339–341.

Rev. Jonathan Edwards, who must still be reckoned as perhaps the greatest theologian America has produced, although later generations have insisted on remembering him chiefly for the lurid way in which he preached the terrible fate of "sinners in the hands of an angry God." The revival spread far and wide, continued for several years, and excited attention even in England. The consequence was that in 1740 the Rev. George Whitefield, a young English revivalist of the most extraordinary eloquence, was invited to come to New England to preach. Everywhere he went he preached to crowds too great for the churches to hold them, and on Boston Common, it was estimated, to more than 20,000 at one time. Together with all the good that resulted from it (from 25,000 to 40,000 were said to have been converted), the revival was marked by great emotional excitement, intense fanaticism, narrow bigotry, and extreme Calvinism. These things became worse under preachers who followed Whitefield. People of education and refinement were scandalized, and many of the leading clergy felt bound to oppose the revivalists and their methods. It was no wonder, for Whitefield had spoken of the New England clergy as "dumb dogs, half devils and half beasts, spiritually blind, and leading people to hell." He so bitterly attacked Harvard and Yale Colleges for their growing liberality, that when he made a second visit four years later they opposed him as uncharitable, censorious, a slanderer, deluder, and dreamer, and did not invite him to preach before them again. The pulpits of many churches also were closed to him, and for this he bitterly criticized their ministers.

This reaction from the Great Awakening cost Edwards his pulpit; while many independent thinkers in pulpit and in pew set their faces against the strict Calvinism which he and Whitefield had sought to revive. There was as yet no con-

troversy about the Trinity, but the orthodox doctrine of the atonement was increasingly criticized, "Arminianism" was on the increase, and there was a growing demand for more simplicity, reason, and tolerance in religious beliefs. The works of the English liberals, both Anglican and Presbyterian, were widely read and in good repute; and though to counteract their influence Edwards wrote two of his most powerful works, he could not stem the tide that kept steadily undermining Calvinism. In 1756 an anonymous "Layman" at Boston had Emlyn's *Humble Inquiry* reprinted, and challenged any one to disprove its Arian teachings from the Scriptures if he could. It was the first antitrinitarian book published in America. In the following year liberals in New Hampshire went so far as to revise their catechism and soften down its Calvinism. From now on until the Revolutionary War the doctrine of the Trinity was more and more called in question. Of course there was as yet no Unitarianism in America, or hardly even in England; but Arian views were becoming fairly common. As early as 1758 the Rev. John Rogers of Leominster was dismissed from his pulpit for disbelieving in the divinity of Christ, and several replies to Emlyn's book had been sent forth. Ten years later orthodox ministers were complaining that the divinity of Christ was even being laughed at as antiquated and unfashionable, and was neglected or disbelieved by a number of the Boston ministers, and that the heresy was rapidly spreading.

Out of this ferment of religious thought before the Revolution four names rise above others as leaders in our movement —Arians, not Unitarians, yet rightly to be regarded as the advance heralds of the Unitarian movement, and hence deserving especially to be remembered. First of these is Dr. Charles Chauncy, minister of the First Church, Boston,

for sixty years, 1727--1787. As a patriot he was ardent for the cause of the colonies, and as a minister he had led the opposition to Whitefield and his revivalism. His favorite authors were the English liberals, he corresponded with English Arians, and he was one of the first in America to preach against the doctrine of eternal punishment. A bolder thinker and writer was Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, minister of the West Church, Boston, from 1747 to 1766, for his outspoken stand against all oppression called "the father of civil and religious liberty in Massachusetts and America." Even at the beginning of his ministry he was known for so much of a heretic that the Boston ministers would not assist in ordaining him, and they never admitted him to their Association. He went his way little heeding, corresponded with English Arians and read their books, with pungent phrases held up the doctrines of Calvinism to scorn, expressed his doctrinal views without disguise or timidity, opposed the use of creeds on principle, preached against the Trinity in 1753, and two years later urged in print the strict unity of God. As he was the first preacher in America to come out squarely in speech and in print against the doctrine of the Trinity, and as his people heartily supported him, and as all his successors in the pulpit held similar views, it may fairly be said that the West Church was the earliest church in America to abandon Trinitarianism.

Another minister who during his unparalleled pastorate of almost seventy years at Hingham had great influence in spreading liberal views in a quiet way was Dr. Ebenezer Gay. Although he did not come out boldly like Mayhew, who had studied under him and been influenced by his intimate friendship, he strongly opposed the use of creeds,

and is said to have ceased to believe in the Trinity by soon after the middle of the century. The same is said of his neighbor, the Rev. Lemuel Briant of North Braintree (now Quincy). Briant had graduated from Harvard at seventeen, was a bold and fearless thinker, expressed himself with vigor, and was an intimate friend of Mayhew. While yet in his twenties he preached against Calvin's doctrine a sermon of great boldness, which made him a marked man, and brought upon him many attacks. He was charged with being not only Arminian but Socinian, and his opponents had a council of churches called to consider the complaints against him; the final result of which was that his church, after investigating the case for themselves, supported him strongly. This was in 1753, and is the first clear case of a church formally taking the liberal position. Though the doctrine of the Trinity was not involved in this action, the church at Quincy ever afterwards remained on the liberal side.

Though the conservatives regarded them with grave apprehension, the liberal views of these and other ministers were well known, and no particular attempt was made to conceal them. They were simply the progressives in the Congregational Church, in which there was as yet not the remotest thought of a division, though liberal views were progressing rapidly and spreading far. The American Revolution for a time checked the progress of the movement by diverting men's thoughts from question of theology to those of patriotism, though even then, with orthodox vigilance against heresy for a time relaxed, influence came from an unexpected quarter. For Priestley and Price,[1] the latter a strong Arian, and the former by now a decided Unitarian,

[1] See Chapter xxxii, and page 355.

were outspoken in behalf of the colonies, and so to a less marked degree were Lindsey and many of the liberal English Dissenters;[1] and along with their political writings their religious works were brought over from England, and were the more attentively read as being the words of friends of America. Although they went too far for most of the New England liberals, on a few of them they produced a lasting impression; and thus they advanced the outposts of the liberal movement yet further.

Thus far, as we have noted, none of the Congregational ministers or churches was Unitarian, or would have been at all willing to go further than Arianism. Hence it happened that the first American church to take a distinct position and make its belief and form of worship positively Unitarian was not Congregational but Episcopal. King's Chapel, Boston, established in 1686 as the first Episcopal church in New England, found itself at the end of the Revolution without a minister, or any hope of securing one from England. It therefore invited a young layman, James Freeman, in 1783 to conduct its worship, and to preach when inclined. The views of Samuel Clarke[2] were widespread in America, and the Athanasian Creed had never been popular here, so that from the start Freeman was given leave to omit it. It was at about this time that an Episcopal clergyman of Salem, when asked why he still read the Creed if he did not believe it, replied, "I read it as if I did not believe it." Indeed, when the American Episcopal Church came to organize after the Revolution, it was at first proposed thoroughly to revise the Prayer Book, omitting among other

[1] At least three of this group were made Doctors of Divinity before or during the Revolution by the orthodox colleges of Brown, Princeton, and Yale.

[2] See page 325.

things both the Nicene and the Athanasian Creeds; and there was for a time a prospect that this would become the liberal Church of America.[1]

It was not long before Freeman began to feel uneasy about other parts of the liturgy, especially those relating to the Trinity. He reported his difficulties to his people, and proposed to resign. They asked him rather to preach a series of sermons on the subject, and the result of his doing so was that most of them accepted his views. An English Unitarian minister, William Hazlitt, who was at that time visiting Boston, gave him much light, and showed him a copy of Lindsey's revised Prayer Book; and not long afterwards the proprietors of the Chapel voted to follow Lindsey's example, and omitted from their liturgy all references to the Trinity, and all prayers to Christ.[2] Thus in 1785 King's Chapel, though it did not become Unitarian in name, became in fact a Unitarian church nearly a generation before other liberal churches in New England would own that name or adopt really Unitarian views. Freeman had not meant to withdraw from the Episcopal Church, a considerable number of whose clergy sympathized with him; but he could now find no bishop willing to seem to approve his course by ordaining him, and hence he had to be ordained as a minister by his own congregation in 1787. Upon this, other Episcopal clergymen in New England went as far as they were able toward excommunicating him, and thus his relations with their church came to an end. He later had an active correspondence with Priestley, Lindsey, and Belsham, and circulated their works; but though some of the more liberal

[1] The Nicene Creed was retained in the Prayer Book as finally adopted in 1786, because the English bishops insisted on that before they would consecrate bishops for the new Church; but the Athanasian Creed was abandoned by almost unanimous desire. See page 315 n.

[2] The Apostles' Creed was not omitted until 1811.

ministers sympathized with him, he had little immediate effect upon the liberal movement in the Congregational churches.

At almost the same time a clear movement toward Unitarian views was taking place at Salem. This town was largely devoted to commerce with India, and most of the men in the three oldest parishes were connected with the foreign trade. Their contact with high-minded men in the Orient made them disbelieve Calvin's doctrine that human nature apart from Christ is totally depraved, and thus they were prepared for more liberal teaching. In this direction they readily followed the lead of their ministers. Of these, the Rev. John Prince of the First Church, like Priestley much given to scientific experiments, read and circulated English Unitarian books. Like him, Dr. Thomas Barnard of the North Church avoided controverted doctrines in his pulpit; but when one of his orthodox parishioners observing this said to him, "Dr. Barnard, I never heard you preach a sermon on the Trinity," he promptly replied, "No; and you never will." The Rev. William Bentley (Freeman's college classmate) of the East Church was more outspoken. From the beginning of his ministry in 1783 he sympathized with the views of Priestley and other English Unitarians, and he openly preached them in 1791, earlier than any one else in New England except Freeman; and his church was practically Unitarian almost as early as King's Chapel. The influence of English Unitarianism was also felt in Maine. In 1792 the rector of the Episcopal Church at Portland, having become convinced by the writings of Priestley and Lindsey, sought to reform its liturgy as Freeman had done; and when influential persons opposed this, the majority of the congregation withdrew with their rector and formed a separate Unitarian church, which continued for several years, as did a similar movement at Saco.

At Boston the movement proceeded more slowly. While the ministers there had generally given up much of their Calvinism, they liked the teaching of Priestley perhaps even less; for they were not Unitarians, as the term was then understood, but Arians, since they still looked upon Christ as a divine being far above man, inspired of God, sinless, and an object of religious faith. However, the doctrines of the Trinity and the deity of Christ were being called in question more and more. The trinitarian doxology was falling out of use. Emlyn's book was again reprinted, and made new converts. Dr. Belknap of the Federal Street Church issued in 1795 a hymn-book which omitted all trinitarian hymns. Confessions of faith, and doctrinal examinations of ministers at their ordination, began to be opposed and disused. There was no religious controversy, for the liberals would not allow themselves to be drawn into one, and they themselves avoided preaching on disputed points; yet by the end of the century only one minister at Boston, only two in Plymouth County, and only three in eight of those east of Worcester remained trinitarian; while at Harvard College all the talented young men were said to be Unitarians, and orthodox views were said to be generally ridiculed. It began to look as though Massachusetts Congregationalism were to become a simple, undogmatic form of faith, which laid little stress upon creeds, and left each person free to be as liberal as he pleased, while all together strove to cultivate reverent, positive Christian character.

The conservatives, however, were not willing to have it rest thus, but wished to lay strong emphasis upon the doctrines which their fathers had held. Even before the Revolution warning voices had begun to be raised against departing from the old faith, and from about 1790 they had grown more frequent. A new revival of Calvinism broke out, like

a belated echo of the Great Awakening, and with much the same sort of result. For its fresh insistence upon the Trinity and the deity of Christ only made many realize how far they had departed from these doctrines, as the former revival had made them realize how far they had departed from the sterner doctrines of Calvin. The liberal cause now gained strength faster than ever before, and feeling fresh assurance the liberals began to reprint more English books to spread liberal views, to print new ones of their own, and to introduce hymn-books without the familiar trinitarian hymns and doxologies. In another quarter also the early Universalists were attacking the doctrine of eternal punishment, and their leader, the Rev. Hosea Ballou, published in 1805 a *Treatise on the Atonement* which was (unless we except the brief reference in Mayhew's book [1]) the first by an American writer to deny the doctrine of the Trinity. Liberal views of Christianity seemed everywhere to be in the air.

The movement also spread into Connecticut, although here it was soon checked because the churches there, unlike those in Massachusetts, were organized into "consociations," which had the power of deposing a minister whose beliefs were not considered sound, even though his own congregation might wish to keep him.[2] Hence when the Rev. John Sherman of Mansfield, who had adopted the views of Priestley and Lindsey, made them known to his people, he was practically forced to leave them although they desired him to stay. This led him to publish in that same year (1805) a book on *One God in One Person Only*, which was the first full defense of Antitrinitarianism to come from an Ameri-

[1] See page 396.

[2] Unitarianism also disqualified one for public office in Connecticut, and abridged his rights in the courts.

can writer. Removing to the western frontier the next year, he became the first minister of the liberal church at Oldenbarnevelt, N. Y., which has been already referred to.[1] Five years later his friend, the Rev. Abiel Abbot of Coventry, also fell under suspicion of heresy, and was similarly forced from his parish. With one exception, that of Brooklyn (1817), these are the only churches in Connecticut in which Antitrinitarianism gained any footing at the time when it was rapidly spreading in Massachusetts; and those who felt oppressed by the strict orthodoxy of the Congregational churches mostly sought the freer fellowship of the Episcopal Church.

In Pennsylvania, Unitarianism started quite independently of the liberal movement among the Congregationalists in Massachusetts. In 1783 the Rev. William Hazlitt, an English Unitarian minister who had strongly sympathized with the colonists during the late war, came to America hoping to find a settlement. It was he that encouraged Freeman in the action he took at King's Chapel.[2] Though he failed to find a pulpit, and had at length to return to England, he preached at various places from Maryland to Maine, including Philadelphia, where he found a number of English Unitarians living and in 1784 reprinted a number of Priestley's tracts. These doubtless helped pave the way for a church there. When Priestley reached America in 1794,[3] though he was heartily welcomed as a distinguished man of science and friend of America, his religious opinions were dreaded, and he was nowhere invited by the ministers to preach save at Princeton. Even from the liberals at Boston no word of welcome came to him in his exile. He

[1] See page 389.
[2] See page 399.
[3] See page 366.

found, however, many not connected with the existing orthodox churches who would have welcomed Unitarian preaching. He was thus invited to establish a church at New York, and for a time he cherished a scheme for getting ministers sent out from England to gather congregations there and at Philadelphia. Upon settling at Northumberland he founded a church in 1794, which must be called the first in America both to hold the Unitarian faith and to bear the Unitarian name.[1] Many English Unitarians came to America soon after the Revolution, and there was a considerable group of them at Philadelphia, where they had made an unsuccessful attempt to settle a minister of their faith in 1792. In 1796, however, while Priestley was visiting there he encouraged them to organize a church which should hold services with lay preachers. The members were all English Unitarians, mostly young men, and they maintained lay services with some interruption until they were able, in 1812, with the aid of English friends, to erect the first Unitarian church building in America.[2] Their first regular minister was not settled until 1825.

In New England after the Revolution liberal tendencies in the Congregational churches kept steadily growing. Thus at Worcester in 1785 the liberals in the First Church withdrew and formed a new society with Aaron Bancroft, then an Arian, as their minister. At Taunton in 1792 the orthodox withdrew and formed a new church because the First Church was controlled by liberals. In Plymouth a

[1] Early in this same year an English layman, John Butler, held religious services at New York, and a Unitarian church is said to have been organized; but after three months he fell ill, and no more is heard of it.

[2] When the church was incorporated in 1813, the junior minister of King's Chapel strongly urged them not to use the obnoxious name Unitarian, but they did not regard the advice.

similar division took place in 1800. At Fitchburg two years later his strong Calvinism caused the dismissal of the Rev. Samuel Worcester, later to become a leading opponent of the Unitarians. Nevertheless in most places the liberals could not easily be identified as such, for they had engaged in no controversy, had formed no party, and had neither platform, policy nor leader. Though they no longer adhered to the old Calvinism of their fathers, they agreed upon hardly any new position except disbelief in the Trinity. Generous toleration of difference in beliefs existed; and although, in order to keep liberal views from spreading further, some of the churches now began to require their members to assent to orthodox creeds, except for a few such instances as have been named above, the two wings of the Congregational Church still lived together in harmony as of old. This was the situation at the end of the eighteenth century; but the nineteenth century was still very young when this peace was destroyed by a period of sharp controversy of the conservatives against the liberals, which was to divide the Congregational Church, and to force the Unitarians to form a separate denomination. That unhappy story will form the theme of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXXV

THE UNITARIAN CONTROVERSY IN AMERICA, 1805–1835

The last chapter told how during more than half a century the Congregational churches of Massachusetts were slowly and almost imperceptibly growing more liberal in belief. During much of the time the conservatives noted this fact with growing apprehension, though they were able to point to little or nothing definite enough to furnish a point for attack; for the liberals were content to let the old beliefs fade away without notice, and preferred to confine their preaching to the essentials of practical Christianity as shown in life and character. It was not until 1805 that an event took place which convinced the conservatives that their fears that the churches were becoming honeycombed with heresy were but too well founded; and this event took place not in any church, but in Harvard College.

The college had been founded by the Puritans in 1636 primarily to train up educated ministers for their churches; and among its endowments was one given in 1721 for a professorship in divinity. The donor, a liberal English merchant named Thomas Hollis, whose intimate friends and advisers had been on the liberal side of the Salters' Hall controversy,[1] had provided that the incumbent should be "of sound and orthodox" belief; while a supplementary legacy for the same chair required explicit acceptance of a conserv-

[1] See page 336.

ative creed. In 1803 this chair fell vacant, and for more than a year no election was had because the liberals and the conservatives, being evenly balanced, could not agree upon a candidate. The liberals favored the Rev. Henry Ware of Hingham; while the orthodox, charging that he was a Unitarian, opposed him. The opposition was led by Dr. Jedidiah Morse [1] of Charlestown, who had for fifteen years been the sole public defender of the doctrine of the Trinity in the vicinity of Boston, and who now insisted that a Calvinist should be chosen. At length the liberals gained the majority and elected Ware in 1805. This showed that the liberal party were now in control of the college, and the fact was soon further emphasized by the appointment of a liberal president and several liberal professors.

The orthodox, thoroughly aroused at finding their worst fears realized, and seeing that henceforth their young ministers were to be under not orthodox but liberal teachers, now opened what might be called a "thirty years' war," which was to end in one hitherto united church being divided into two sects bitterly opposing each other. Dr. Morse founded the *Panoplist* magazine, in which he carried on an aggressive warfare against the liberals, attacking them incessantly, and urging them, if they disbelieved in the Trinity, to come out and say so openly. Though their views had long been well enough known, and had not been concealed, they did not accept his challenge. Dr. Morse next exerted himself to establish at Andover a theological seminary which should remain forever orthodox, for its constitution required

[1] He deserves to be remembered as "the father of American geography," and as father also of S. F. B. Morse, inventor of the electric telegraph. After his narrow Calvinism had led nearly half of his congregation to withdraw and form a liberal church in 1815, the rest of them tired of him and let him go; while his son later became a radical Unitarian.

the professors every five years to renew their subscription to a creed which was perpetually to remain "entirely and identically the same, without the least alteration, addition, or diminution." [1] The Andover Seminary was opened for instruction in 1808, and henceforth became the chief place for the training of orthodox ministers; while in 1821 an orthodox college was also founded at Amherst to offset the liberal tendencies of Harvard.

Already in 1802 the conservative ministers, led by Dr. Morse, though in the face of strong opposition, had sought to strengthen the cause of orthodoxy by forming a General Association on the basis of the Westminster Catechism, thus excluding liberals. This was really the beginning of the split between them. Two years later an unsuccessful attempt was made to force the liberals out of the ministers' state convention. In 1807 when Samuel Willard of Deerfield, having been refused ordination by one council on account of his liberal views, was ordained by another, he and his church were outcast by all their orthodox neighbors. In 1808, when John Codman was settled over the Second Church in Dorchester, he began by announcing that he would not exchange pulpits with men of liberal views. This was the first move in Massachusetts toward that "exclusive policy" which had already been urged in Connecticut two years before, and which ere long became general among the orthodox, and has largely continued down to this day. At

[1] With the lapse of time this creed became a burden too heavy to bear. Some of the professors refused to keep on signing it; others were prosecuted for having forsaken it. After the failure of such a prosecution in 1890, the creed came to be practically ignored; and in 1908, after exactly a hundred years of separate existence, the Seminary removed to Cambridge and entered into alliance with the Harvard Divinity School, which, as the nursery of Unitarian ministers, had formerly been its chief rival. Finally in 1922 the two schools were merged into one on an unsectarian basis.

Boston the next year the orthodox took a strong aggressive step by organizing the Park Street Church, whose minister, by preaching a sermon "On the Use of Real Fire in Hell," won for the location of his church the name of "Brimstone Corner."

In individual congregations also lines were being more closely drawn. Some of the churches tried to shut out heresy by adopting elaborate confessions of faith for their members to accept, and thus paved the way for sad divisions a little later. In case of contest the side out-voted would sometimes separate from the majority. Thus at New Bedford in 1810 the conservatives withdrew and formed a new church. At Sandwich, where the minister, having grown strongly Calvinistic, was dismissed from his parish by a small liberal majority in 1811, he organized a new church among his followers. In 1813 a liberal minority withdrew from Codman's Dorchester church and organized a new one. Other such instances occurred within the few years following.

At the same time, liberal views were spreading faster than ever in the Congregational churches, and English Unitarian books were reprinted in Boston in increasing number, and were widely read. The Rev. Noah Worcester, a country minister of New Hampshire, influenced by Emlyn and other English writers, published in 1810 a little book called *Bible News*, which was Arian. For this his brother ministers bitterly attacked him, maligned his personal character, and caused him to lose his pulpit; but he at once found friends among the liberal ministers of Boston, served the liberal cause well, and later won enduring fame as the founder of the peace movement in America.

As for the liberal ministers, although by 1812 there were at least a hundred of them, only Freeman at King's Chapel

and Bentley at Salem were really Unitarian in belief. Of the rest only one or two had ever preached a sermon against the Trinity; and while they had generally ceased to hold that doctrine, yet they had not reached any wide agreement as to other points. They knew indeed that they had pretty well outgrown their Calvinism, and they acknowledged only the authority of Scripture; but their main emphasis was on the practical virtues of Christian life, and their main opposition was to narrowness of spirit and bondage to creeds, while for the rest they advocated Christian charity, open-mindedness, and tolerance. They were most of them Arian in belief, and so strongly opposed to what was then known as Unitarianism that when it had been charged that Professor Ware was a Unitarian, the charge was indignantly resented as a calumny. In fact, they did not regard themselves as heretics at all, for they knew that their views were widely held both in the Church of England and among the English Dissenters. The Congregational Church was still broad enough to hold both conservatives and liberals; and of the nine old congregations at Boston eight had grown liberal, while the ninth remained orthodox by only the narrowest margin.

All the while that things were in this uncertain state, Dr. Morse in the *Panoplist* kept calling on the liberals to admit that in important respects they had departed far from the faith of their fathers. They stedfastly refused to accept his challenge, for they disliked controversy, and they had no mind to champion special doctrines or to be set off into a separate party. They stood on their rights as free members of Congregational churches, and did not feel under any obligation to report to Dr. Morse or ask his leave.

But now something unexpected occurred which forced the issue. Three years earlier Belsham in London had published

a life of Lindsey. It contained a chapter on the progress of Unitarianism in New England, quoting letters from Dr. Freeman and others giving an inside view of the liberal movement at Boston, and reporting that most of the Boston clergy were Unitarian. Dr. Morse at length discovered the book in 1815 and promptly reprinted this chapter, giving it the title, *American Unitarianism.* It created a tremendous sensation, and ran through five editions in as many months. Dr. Morse's charge seemed to be proved true: the liberals were Unitarians after all. The *Panoplist* followed up the exposure in a severe review, charging that the liberals were secretly scheming to undermine the orthodox faith, and were hypocrites for concealing their true beliefs; and that the orthodox ought therefore at once to separate from those who, since they denied the deity of Christ, could not be considered Christians at all.

The name Unitarian stuck, as Dr. Morse meant that it should, for it was then an odious name, and it has stuck ever since; but it was not fairly given. For the writers of the letters referred to had used it simply to denote disbelief in the Trinity; while as then commonly understood it meant such beliefs as those of Priestley and Belsham, who held that Jesus was in all respects a fallible human being, together with certain philosophical views which were abhorrent to the Boston liberals. The *Panoplist*, however, insisted that they were Unitarians in Belsham's sense of the word. The liberal ministers of Boston were outraged at such misrepresentation of their views, and they felt that the slander must not be let pass without responsible denial. The answer was soon forthcoming in the form of an open letter to the Rev. Samuel C. Thacher of the New South Church, from his friend, the Rev. William Ellery Channing. Though Channing was but thirty-five, he had been for a dozen years

the beloved and honored minister of the Federal Street Church, and of late had come to be regarded as the leader of the Boston liberals; and he was destined at length to be the most distinguished of all American Unitarians. Though a semi-invalid, he had a remarkable charm of voice, manner, and character. In his earlier ministry he had been a moderate Calvinist, had been on friendly terms with Dr. Morse, and had preached the sermon at Codman's ordination; but he had never believed the doctrine of the Trinity, and had never made a secret of his views. He held that Christ, though less than God, was far above man, a sinless being, and the object of religious trust and love. In short, he was an Arian.

Always shrinking from controversy, Channing could yet speak out strongly when he must; and in this letter he now indignantly denied the *Panoplist's* charges. He admitted that his brethren disbelieved in the Trinity, and in that sense alone were Unitarians; though they preferred to call themselves liberal Christians, or rational Christians, or catholic Christians; while they were wholly out of sympathy with the views of Priestley and Belsham, and were nearer to the Calvinists than to them. Most of them were Arians, some were not clear as to their views, and hardly one could accept Belsham's creed, though to believe with him was no crime. Their views had not been concealed: Dr. Morse and others had long known them. But the disputed doctrines had been kept out of their pulpits as unprofitable, and had been treated as though they had never been heard of. Such was his answer; and in conclusion he urged that it would be a great wrong to Christianity, and a great injustice to individuals, to create a division in the church by shutting any out of it as not Christians simply because they held more liberal views of scripture teaching than did the others.

The controversy was continued on the orthodox side by Dr. Worcester of Salem, whose two brothers had already suffered persecution in New Hampshire for their Arianism,[1] and who was himself doubtless still smarting over his own dismissal from his Fitchburg church.[2] Three letters were published on each side, and several other writers also took a hand in the discussion. Dr. Worcester picked flaws in Channing's letter, pressed the *Panoplist's* charges, and urged that the differences between the orthodox and the liberals were too serious to be longer ignored, and that the two must part company. Channing replied that in the essential part of Christian faith, which was that Jesus is the Christ, they were agreed, and that any minor differences did not vitally matter. The controversy ran for half a year, and ended in the opening of a permanent breach between the two wings of Massachusetts Congregationalists. The orthodox were made more than ever determined in their attitude; while the Unitarians (as they were henceforth known) began to abandon their policy of reserve and to speak out plainly also against other doctrines of Calvinism, and their views spread accordingly.

Before and during this controversy Dr. Morse and his strict Calvinist friends were steadily trying to get the Massachusetts churches to form "consociations," with power to depose heretical ministers as Sherman and Abbot had been deposed in Connecticut.[3] But both liberals and moderate Calvinists resisted this plan as dangerous to liberty of conscience, so that after some years' effort the scheme was dropped. In an increasing number of churches, however, creeds were adopted to keep heretics from becoming

1 See page 409.
2 See page 405.
3 See page 402 f.

members, and in a few cases where the orthodox could not control the situation as they wished, they withdrew and formed separate churches. More and more of the orthodox ministers also refused to include in their list of monthly pulpit exchanges any who were suspected of being Unitarians; so that while there was still, indeed, but a single denomination of Congregationalists, its two wings were steadily drawing further apart. Thus things went on for a few years, with the orthodox getting further away from the liberals, though with hope of reconciliation not yet wholly despaired of, until two events occurred which proved decisive. These were Channing's Baltimore sermon in 1819, and the decision of the Dedham case in 1820. We must speak of these in turn.

After the controversy of 1815 the orthodox kept treating the Unitarians in the Church with such increasing narrowness, and kept attacking their beliefs with such increasing bitterness, that at length Channing, peaceable as he was, felt bound to strike a telling blow in return. The opportunity to do so came in 1819, when he was asked to preach the sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks as minister of the church lately established at Baltimore, the first extension beyond New England of the liberal movement in Massachusetts. In this sermon he boldly took the aggressive against the orthodox, taking up the distinguishing doctrines of Unitarians one by one, showing that they were supported by both Scripture and reason, and holding up to pitiless attack the contrasted doctrines of orthodoxy in all their nakedness. Probably no other sermon ever preached in America has had so many readers and so great an influence. It put the orthodox at once on the defensive. They complained that Channing had misrepresented their beliefs and had injured their feelings by his harsh state-

ments. Professor Moses Stuart of Andover wrote a whole book to defend the doctrine of the Trinity against Channing's attack, though in it he admitted that he did not know clearly what the doctrine meant; and he even brought upon himself from a Presbyterian source the charge that he too was tending toward Unitarianism. Channing himself said no more, but Professor Andrews Norton of Harvard renewed the attack upon the Trinity with such effect that the orthodox withdrew on this point, and were content to lay their emphasis henceforth upon the deity of Christ.

Professor Leonard Woods of Andover now came to the defense of the other doctrines which Channing had attacked, and debated them back and forth with Professor Ware of Harvard for three years, in a printed controversy which ran to over eight hundred pages. This "Wood'n-Ware controversy," as it was called, was carried on in fine spirit on both sides, and it made clear that even the orthodox had drifted further away from the old doctrines than they had yet acknowledged or realized. Nevertheless they continued to pursue more widely than ever their policy of exclusion of Unitarians and separation from them; while the Unitarians, who had had their views so clearly stated and so ably defended by Channing, now first fairly realized where they stood, and rallied to their standard with enthusiasm. The division between the two wings had become practically complete.

In the unhappy division that took place at this time, congregations were split in two, and even families were divided against themselves. But the question now arose, whose should be the church property when Unitarians and orthodox drew apart? This was the question involved in the Dedham case. In order to understand the matter, one must remember that in the Massachusetts towns there had long been

two religious organizations. The "parish," or "society," consisted of all the male voters of the town organized to maintain religious worship, which they were bound by law to support by taxation. The "church" on the other hand consisted only of those persons within the parish (generally a small minority) who had made a public profession of their religious faith, and had joined together in a serious inner circle for religious purposes, and were admitted to the observance of the Lord's Supper. The church members were on the whole (though not exclusively) more devout and more zealous than the rest of the members of the parish, and a large majority of them were usually women. Now by law a minister must be elected by vote of the whole parish which supported him; but by natural custom it had come to be generally expected that he must also be acceptable to the church, even if not nominated by it. For generations church and parish had generally agreed; though if they did not, means were provided for settling the matter through a mutual council. But when the controversy arose between the orthodox and the Unitarians, disagreements became frequent and often serious; and in many cases it happened that while the majority of the church members wished to settle a conservative from Andover, the majority of the parish would prefer a liberal man from Harvard, and usually no way of compromise could be found.

This was the situation at Dedham, where the pulpit fell vacant in 1818, and the parish voted two to one to settle a liberal man, while the church by a small majority voted against him. As the parish refused to yield, a majority of the church withdrew and formed a new church, taking with them the church property, which was in this instance nearly enough to support the minister. A lawsuit followed, to determine which was the real church, and which might hold

the property, the majority of the church who seceded from the parish, or the minority who stayed in it. The case was bitterly fought, and the Supreme Court of the state at length decided in 1820 that seceders forfeited all their rights, and that even the smallest minority remaining with the parish were still the parish church, and entitled to the church property; indeed, that if even the whole church should secede it must still leave the church property behind it. This legal decision, which would of course apply to any similar cases arising elsewhere, aroused among the orthodox a storm of indignation so deep and bitter that it has hardly subsided after a hundred years. They declared that the judge, being a Unitarian, was prejudiced in favor of his own party; and for many years they continued to cry out against the injustice of the decision, and against what they insisted was "plunder" of their churches.

The orthodox losses as the result of the divisions that took place were indeed severe. In eighty-one instances the orthodox members seceded, nearly 4,000 of them in all, thus losing funds and property estimated at over $600,000, not to mention the loss of churches which went to the liberal side without a division; and they had to build new meeting-houses for themselves. They called themselves "the exiled churches"; but while there were cases in which the liberal majority oppressed the minority and meant to force them out, the latter most frequently seceded because they were not permitted, though often but few in number, to impose a minister of their choice upon the large majority of those who attended the church and supported it by their taxes, but to whom he was not acceptable. Nor were the losses all on one side. There were at least a dozen cases, first and last, in which it was the liberals that seceded, rather than listen to the preaching of doctrines which they believed

to be untrue and harmful. There were happily many others in which there was no division. Of these the larger number remained orthodox, but thirty-nine became liberal without division, and often so quietly and gradually that no one could have told when the invisible line was crossed. Among these latter were twenty out of twenty-five original churches, including all the most important ones. In only three of the larger towns of eastern Massachusetts did the parish remain orthodox, and at Boston only the Old South. In several cases the whole church withdrew in a body; in others only one or two members were left. At the end of the controversy a few over a third of the Congregational churches of Massachusetts were found to have become Unitarian.

Although churches kept on separating until as late as 1840, the greater number of divisions took place in the years immediately following the Baltimore sermon and the Dedham case decision. The Unitarians were thenceforth, against their wish, a separate denomination from the rest of the Congregationalists. They found themselves consisting of 125 churches, mostly within twenty-five miles of Boston, though with a few distant outposts at New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Charleston. In eastern Massachusetts they had for the time won a sweeping victory. The ablest and most eloquent ministers, the leaders in public life, in education, in literature, were theirs, as were the great majority of those of wealth, culture, and high social position. In fact, they had quite too much prestige for their own good, since they now seemed as a church to have little more to strive for. The truth is that it was not so much Unitarian doctrines as Unitarian freedom that had attracted many of them. Hence, while broad in spirit, strongly opposed to sectarianism, and liberal,

though vague, in their beliefs, they were yet conservative in almost everything else. But they were generally reverent in temper and were earnestly devoted to pure morals and good works. The consequence of all this was that they now settled back complacently, and showed far less zeal in promoting their cause than did the orthodox; fondly believing that without any particular effort on their part Unitarianism would ere long sweep the whole country as it had already swept eastern Massachusetts.

The orthodox, on the other hand, were for a time stunned, and in acute fear of losing the whole struggle, in which the Unitarians had made steady gains since 1815. Their champion, Dr. Morse, had gone; their organ, the *Panoplist*, had suspended publication. A strong recruit for their cause, however, now came from Connecticut, where the spread of Unitarianism had thus far been so successfully prevented. Dr. Lyman Beecher, known as the most successful revivalist of his time, and as a powerful and eloquent preacher of tremendous earnestness, had with eager interest long watched the battle from afar when in 1823 he came to Boston to hold revival meetings. He soon revived the fainting spirits of the orthodox. They began to make fresh converts, and many of the wavering were won back from the Unitarian camp. Thus the orthodox reaction began.

When those ministers and churches that had accepted Unitarian beliefs found themselves quite excluded from religious fellowship with those that held to the old beliefs, it became a serious question what they should do. Shut out from the orthodox organizations, should they form a new denomination, or should they go on separately with no attempt to hold together or to act together for the interests they had in common? The older leaders were much disposed to go on as they were, and were opposed to forming

a new denomination; for they had of late seen quite too much of the evils of sectarianism, and they wished no more of them. The younger men had less fear and more zeal, realizing that, if they were to do anything at all to help spread Christianity in the newer parts of the country, they must unite for the purpose; while if they did nothing in the matter they would be simply abandoning the new field wholly to orthodoxy and to beliefs which they felt to be untrue and hurtful. In that case, liberal Christianity might become extinct within a generation.

Since the beginning of the century, indeed, four or five organizations had been formed to promote the spread of Christianity in various ways, in which, though they were quite unsectarian, only the liberals had taken part; and half a dozen publications, notably *The Christian Register*, weekly (1821), and the *Christian Examiner*, quarterly (1824), had been founded, in which the liberals had expressed their views, and had carried on controversy with the orthodox. But now that separation had come it was felt that something more was needed. It was ten or twelve young ministers lately graduated from the Harvard Divinity School that took the lead in the matter, and after long discussion and much opposition joined with a few laymen who shared their views, and in the vestry of Dr. Channing's church organized the American Unitarian Association,[1] "to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity." Dr. Channing gave only passive approval to the move, and declined to be President of the new Association. Boston Unitarians generally were lukewarm. During its first year only sixty-five of them joined the Associa-

[1] There were two meetings, May 25 and 26, 1825. Some weeks passed before it was discovered that on May 26, by an extraordinary coincidence, Unitarians in London had organized the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. See page 378.

tion, and only $1,300 was raised to carry on its work. Yet it set to work with energy and skill, began publishing Unitarian tracts and circulating them in large numbers, and sent a scout into the West who came back reporting many promising fields where Unitarian churches would be heartily welcomed. Missionary preachers were sent afield, a missionary to the city poor was employed, a Sunday-school Society was organized (1826), and especial efforts were made to spread Unitarian literature. Yet so afraid were the churches of losing some of their liberty in the bonds of a new sect, that for twenty-five years only from a third to a half of them would contribute to the work of the Association, which thus had only from $5,000 to $15,000 a year to spend. Its work could grow but slowly until the timid conservatism of an older generation could be replaced by the missionary earnestness of a younger one.

Dr. Beecher's revival meetings at Boston in 1823 had revived orthodoxy for a time; but it was still on the defensive, and now the Unitarians had organized for aggressive effort. Beecher was glad therefore to accept a call to a church just established in Hanover Street, which had been organized on a basis designed to prevent it from ever calling a liberal minister. Coming to Boston to live in 1826 he at once began a revival which lasted five years. It often crowded his church, and it stirred up the drowsy Unitarians to unaccustomed activity. He took a bold aggressive stand, attacking Unitarian beliefs as unscriptural, and the results of them as unfavorable to true religion. Some years before this a Presbyterian clergyman preaching at Baltimore had declared that Unitarian preachers were "most acceptable to the gay, the fashionable, the worldly minded, and even the licentious"; and another in New York had charged that religion and morals had alarmingly declined, and vice had increased at

Boston since the spread of Unitarianism there, and he had insinuated that even the Unitarian ministers were men of loose morals and little piety. Dr. Beecher did not venture to go so far as this; but he and those that followed his leadership repeatedly charged that the effect of Unitarianism was to make its followers less earnest in their religion, less faithful in their religious habits, and less strict in their moral standards. It was declared that they had been steadily giving up one doctrine of the Christian faith after another, until little was now left. As their views of the inspiration of the Bible were changing, it became common to call Unitarians infidels; while it was often charged, and as often denied, that by accepting the doctrine of the Universalists they were encouraging men to sin by taking away their fear of eternal punishment.[1]

Perhaps the charge that hurt the Unitarians most, and had the most truth in it, was that whereas the orthodox were deeply in earnest about their religion, zealous, self-denying, and full of missionary spirit, the Unitarians were lukewarm, often indifferent to their church, lax in religious observances, and opposed to missions. Indeed, the first Treasurer of the American Unitarian Association felt these things so keenly that he resigned his office in discouragement and went back to orthodoxy. This became the occasion of a pamphlet controversy which attracted much attention on both sides. Although the Unitarians preferred to meet the

[1] The early Universalists, by denying any future punishment whatever, had seemed to be dangerous to good morals by removing the chief ground for living a right life here. They were also Trinitarians, and on various grounds most Unitarians held them in abhorrence, and long kept aloof from them. They soon abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, but it was a long generation before the Unitarians by gradual steps had ventured generally to deny eternal punishment. The two denominations have long since been closely alike in thought.

passionate zeal of the orthodox with easy-going self-confidence, they could not remain silent under such attacks as these. They returned blow for blow, calling attention to the most repulsive doctrines of Calvinism, until at length Dr. Beecher was driven to admit that he too had abandoned various doctrines held sacred by the fathers, and in his "new Calvinism" had thus taken the same steps which the earlier liberals had taken two generations before.

Dr. Channing in particular felt compelled again to come to the defense of Unitarianism in a dedication sermon preached at New York in 1826, in which he compared the effect of the doctrines of Unitarianism with those of orthodoxy, held that Unitarian Christianity was most favorable to piety, and likened the orthodox doctrine of the atonement to a gallows erected at the center of the universe for the public execution of a God. This sermon created a sensation second only to that at Baltimore, and was never forgiven him by the orthodox. The controversies that filled the next six or eight years now became more bitter than ever before. To keep these alive and push them vigorously Dr. Beecher helped found a new periodical, the *Spirit of the Pilgrims*, to take the place of the *Panoplist*. Quarrels became angry and personal. Charges of bigotry, and unfairness, insincerity, hypocrisy, and falsehood, were freely made on each side, and many things were said in the heat of controversy of which the authors ought to have been, and no doubt afterwards were heartily ashamed. Bitterness was aroused which still survived after two generations. A church dedication, an ordination, or an anniversary was seized upon as the occasion for one side or the other to proclaim its views. Whatever might be said or printed was closely scanned for some point of attack; the worst things that could be found said by some hasty spirit on one side

would be held up in triumph for criticism by the other in the pamphlet war that would follow. The parties often misunderstood and sometimes misrepresented each other, and would spend page after page in picking at petty flaws and inconsistencies, until at length peaceable souls grew disgusted with the whole business and resolved to cease from the fruitless strife. For the whole sad quarrel had done much harm and little good to those who engaged in it, and to true religion. The only clear result of it all was that the orthodox became more fixed in their orthodoxy, and the Unitarians more convinced of the truth of their heresy.

The fiercest quarrels of all arose over divisions in local parishes. Of these, that at Groton in 1826 was perhaps the most noted. The aged minister of the parish asked for a colleague, and an orthodox candidate was heard. The church, consisting of only some thirty voting members out of a parish of three hundred, called him by a vote of seventeen to eight; but the parish, which had grown liberal by three to one, would not approve the choice. The question was whether so small a minority should be allowed to impose upon so large a majority a minister who was distasteful to them. The orthodox withdrew, with much bitterness of feeling and complaint of injustice, and formed a new church. In the heated contest over this case Dr. Beecher took a leading part. In the First Parish at Cambridge the minister, the venerable Dr. Abiel Holmes (father of Oliver Wendell Holmes), joined the orthodox re-action which Dr. Beecher was leading so vigorously, and ceased to exchange with liberal ministers as he had previously been accustomed to do. Two-thirds of the church supported their minister in this action, but three-quarters of the much larger parish insisted that exchanges be continued as before. Neither party to the controversy would yield or compromise,

and it ended with the dismissal of Dr. Holmes in 1829. At Brookfield in 1827, when a liberal majority of the parish settled a Unitarian minister, all the male members of the church but two withdrew, excommunicated those two and claimed the church property; but the two members remaining organized a new church, went to law, and recovered the property, as in the Dedham case. At Waltham in 1825 every member, male and female, of the church seceded from the parish, took their minister with them, and formed a new church and society. There were many other cases similar to these, though less conspicuous.

These controversies had not died down before a yet more heated one arose over the subject of exclusiveness; for as the orthodox regained strength and confidence they grew increasingly exclusive against the Unitarians, until they at length denied them the privilege of their turn in preaching the annual sermon before the state convention of Congregational ministers to which both belonged. Indeed, there were thought to be signs that they meant to close against the Unitarians everything in church and state. A young orthodox preacher aroused much attention in 1828 by asserting that though Unitarians formed no more than a fourth of the population of the state, they monopolized public offices, controlled nine-tenths of the political power, and influenced legislation and court decisions in their own interest and against the orthodox; and he called upon orthodox voters to remember these things when voting at elections. Once more, and for the last time, Channing now entered the lists in a memorable sermon before the Legislature (1830) on *Spiritual Freedom.* He charged that orthodoxy was using all its power in the way of bigotry and persecution to suppress freedom of thought in religion by raising the cry of heresy, and that this was in effect a new

Inquisition; and he uttered a strong protest against such a spirit. The orthodox replied that these charges were not true, and that it was they that had cause to complain of being ridiculed by the Unitarians; that they were given no share in public offices and honors, and no positions at Harvard University. Professor Stuart called upon Channing to withdraw his charges or prove them. Channing himself made no reply, but one of the younger ministers published a whole volume of evidence that for a generation the orthodox had tried in every way to oppress the liberal party in their churches. Here the matter rested, for the fires of controversy had nearly burnt themselves out. Most had grown weary of it and disgusted with it. The final act was at Salem in 1833, where an orthodox minister in a public address attacked Unitarians with personal abuse of a violence hitherto unknown, calling them "cold-blooded infidels." But the controversy had lost its leader with the departure of Dr. Beecher [1] from Boston in 1832, followed by the suspension of the *Spirit of the Pilgrims* the next year. The separation of Church and State in Massachusetts in 1834 removed the occasion for further controversy over the property rights of churches. Moreover, the orthodox were becoming involved in a doctrinal controversy within their own body, so that probably every one concerned was glad of an excuse to cultivate peace.

The separation of the two bodies was now complete beyond hope of reconciliation. The last exchange of pulpits had taken place. The two denominations went their different

[1] It is interesting to note that though Dr. Beecher had been the leading champion of conservative orthodoxy against Unitarianism, he himself had to stand trial a few years later for heresy; and that three of his seven sons, all of whom were ministers, were well known for their liberal views and that one of his grand-daughters became the wife of a Unitarian minister, Edward Everett Hale.

ways, the Unitarians with about one hundred and twenty-five churches,[1] the orthodox with some four hundred. The orthodox had moved further than they fully realized from the teachings of Calvin; and the Unitarians further than they realized from their original ground. Without being aware of it, they were already depending much more on reason in religion than on the Bible, and in their views of the nature of Christ had gone far toward the position of Priestley and Belsham. But though they had now settled their final account with orthodoxy, they had even more serious accounts to settle with themselves. Those will form the subject of the next chapter.

[1] But the Universalist movement which had been growing up at about the same time, the Hicksite movement among the Friends from 1827 on, and the Christian Connection in the West, made the total number of churches which had abandoned orthodoxy in the whole country much larger than this.

CHAPTER XXXVI

AMERICAN UNITARIANISM TRYING TO FIND ITSELF: INTERNAL CONTROVERSY AND DEVELOPMENT, 1835–1865

When their long controversy with the orthodox had at last come to an end, the Unitarians found themselves but poorly equipped for carrying on an efficient and healthy life as a religious denomination with a distinct mission of its own. Their organization for promoting their common interests, though now ten years old, was still weak and inefficient, and had fallen far short of winning the support of all their churches. Nor had the progress of their thought gone much beyond the stage of merely dropping a few of the most objectionable doctrines of Calvinism. In their churches were many who were there merely because they were opposed to orthodoxy, but who had no positive and strong convictions in religion, and no earnest devotion to its principles. Many who had been bold defenders of Unitarianism so long as it was attacked, relapsed into inactivity now that the war against it seemed to be over, thinking that its work was done, and that liberal religion would henceforth spread fast enough of itself, without any personal effort of theirs. Most of the rank and file, and many of even the leaders, were content to settle down and enjoy in peace the liberty they had won, with no desire for further progress in thought or in organization. This chapter will try to show how the denomination was gradually roused out

of this torpor, at length began to think and act for itself, and after struggling for thirty years at last found itself, realized its mission, and began to gird itself for its proper work in the religious life of America.

The American Unitarian Association had been formed as a volunteer organization of a few individuals, who hoped in time to enlist the support of the whole denomination in a common cause; but they were long disappointed in this hope. At a period when the orthodox churches were full of reviving life and missionary zeal, and were giving generously for their own work though comparatively little for outside causes, the Unitarians, while giving with great liberality for hospitals, colleges, and all manner of charitable and philanthropic work, were giving pitifully small sums to spread their own religious faith.[1] In the first year of the Association only four of the churches contributed to its funds; and though the number of these steadily increased, after fifteen years scarcely more than a third of the churches known as Unitarian were doing anything for the organized work of their denomination. Several of the largest and wealthiest of the Boston churches gave it nothing at all. They shrank from sacrificing the least of their freedom by joining any organization, they did not care to build up a new denomination, and they disliked even a denominational name. As late as 1835 the minister of the First Church in Boston stated that the word Unitarian had never yet been used in his pulpit.

It was nearly ten years before the Association was able

[1] It is doubtful whether there has ever been a year since the Association was founded in which some individual Unitarian laymen (often several individuals) did not give to education or philanthropy more, often many times more, than the whole denomination was giving for its common work. A single such person is known to have given to benevolent objects $150,000 a year for ten successive years.

to employ a paid Secretary. Nevertheless those that believed in it kept faithfully ahead, and its work and influence grew steadily if slowly. For fifteen years or so its efforts were devoted mainly to spreading the faith through printed tracts. These were issued generally once each month, and were circulated at the rate of 70,000 or more a year, and they were eagerly read by multitudes who had never heard Unitarian preaching. Whenever the funds allowed, preachers were sent on missionary journeys through the West and South. The West was now rapidly filling up with settlers, of whom many had gone from New England and longed for liberal churches such as they had left behind them. It was estimated that two millions of people in the West had outgrown orthodox beliefs, and were in danger of falling quite away from religion, although they were ready to give hearty welcome and strong support to liberal Christianity. Year after year the missionary preachers sent out from New England would come back reporting how eager people in the West and South were to hear Unitarian preaching, how easily churches might be established in scores of thriving new towns, and how great an opportunity there was to liberalize the whole of the new country, if only preachers could be had and a little aid be given at the start. But alas, there were hardly more ministers than were needed in New England, and most of these were reluctant to do pioneer work on the frontier of civilization; while the funds of the Association were too scanty to support them even had they been willing to be sent. The missionary spirit was incredibly sluggish, and the eastern Unitarians seemed to think that the West and South, if left to take their own course, would of themselves soon become as liberal as Massachusetts. Yet despite all this laziness the denomination did steadily grow. A whole series of new churches sprang up in such important centers as Cin-

cinnati, Louisville, Buffalo, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, Mobile, and Syracuse; and by 1840 the one hundred and twenty churches with which the denomination started out in 1825 had increased to two hundred and thirty. Local auxiliaries were formed in more and more of the churches, contributions slowly increased, a permanent fund began to accumulate, and the fear of belonging to a denomination was slowly outgrown.

If the new denomination was slow in settling down to its proper work, it was yet slower in adopting any principles of thought really different from those of orthodoxy. At the end of the Unitarian controversy the Unitarians had, it is true, changed their beliefs as to God, Christ, the atonement, and human nature; yet these might after all be regarded as mere matters of detail. They might still have remained no more than a liberal wing of the old church, as indeed many of them would have preferred to do. In fact, some of them were already beginning to fear that doctrinal changes might go too far, and that liberty in religion might bring with it more dangers than blessings. They were quite satisfied to let reform of doctrines stop where it was, and to build a new fence about an orthodox Unitarianism, in place of the old one about orthodox Calvinism from which they had lately escaped. Though they claimed the right of interpreting the Scriptures by reason, they were inclined to submit to Scripture authority almost more slavishly than the orthodox themselves.

Now all this happened because of the philosophy that both Unitarians and orthodox had long accepted. Both believed with John Locke that all our knowledge is gained through the physical senses. Even the knowledge of God and of religious truth came to us thus. We were justified in believing in God and in a future life, therefore, solely

because Jesus, who taught these doctrines, wrought miracles which men could see, and which proved his teachings to be true. This was the chief reason why one should accept the Christian religion and follow the precepts of Jesus at all. It thus became of the greatest importance for us implicitly to accept the Bible and its miracles, since otherwise the foundation of our religion would be gone.

At the time of which we are speaking, however, there were beginning to be some, especially of the younger men, who were growing more and more dissatisfied with these views of truth, and were wishing to carry the reform of theology further than merely the reform of a few orthodox doctrines. The religion of the day seemed to them dead and mechanical. They had been much influenced by the writings of some of the German philosophers of the past generation, and even more by the English writings of Coleridge and Carlyle. Soon they were given the nickname Transcendentalists. Transcendentalism was working among many of the younger generation in New England like a sort of ferment, and it showed its influence in various ways. They became rebellious against external authority and old traditions of thinking and doing. Impatient with the continued existence of ignorance, poverty, intemperance, slavery, war, and other social ills, they threw themselves eagerly into all sorts of reforms and philanthropies that promised improvement—popular education, normal schools, temperance reform, the anti-slavery movement, woman's rights, non-resistance, communism, vegetarianism, spiritualism, mesmerism, phrenology—some wise and some foolish, but all of them earnestly espoused. They established at Brook Farm in 1841 a coöperative experiment which combined education with agriculture, and became famous though it lasted but six years. They published a magazine called the *Dial* which

in its four years' existence broke new paths in literature. They were the first in America to welcome modern criticism of the Bible. Their movement was a New England Renaissance. Channing, though not identified with it, was in spirit a precursor of Transcendentalism; and most of its adherents were Unitarians.

It is the effect of Transcendentalism upon the religion of the Unitarians that most concerns us here. It spread rapidly among the younger ministers. Its leaders declared that we are not dependent upon miracles, nor upon Jesus, nor upon the Bible, for our knowledge of religious truths; for man is a religious being by nature. Religious truths do not have to be proved by miracles or by reasoning; they do not come to us from the outside; they arise spontaneously within us, and God reveals them to our own souls directly. Hence we do not have to go to past ages and ancient prophets for our religion, or to try to reason it out to ourselves, or to follow the usual religious traditions. We need only to keep our souls open to what God would teach us now in our religious intuitions.

While such thoughts as these had been entertained for some time by a handful of the younger ministers, the first to attract much attention to them by public utterance was Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Divinity School Address. Emerson is generally remembered to-day simply as an American man of letters; but for a number of years he was himself a Unitarian minister. He was descended from eight generations of Puritan ministers, and his father, the Rev. William Emerson, had been minister of the First Church in Boston, and one of the liberals of his time, though he died before the division of the churches occurred. After leaving the Divinity School, Emerson was for three years and a half minister of the Second Church in Boston, from which he

resigned in 1832 because he did not feel that he could conscientiously celebrate the Lord's Supper with the meaning then attached to it. Though he still continued for some years to preach more or less often, he was never settled over another church, but became more and more a lecturer and writer.

In the summer of 1838 Emerson, now rapidly coming into fame for his work on the lecture platform, was invited to preach the sermon before the graduating class of the Divinity School. Only a small roomful were present, but the address they heard began a new era in American Unitarianism. He brought his young hearers the message of Transcendentalism as applied to religion. He complained that the prevailing religion of the day had little life or inspiration in it because it was forever looking to persons and events in the past history of Christianity, rather than listening to hear what God has to say to men to-day; and he urged them not to exaggerate the person of Jesus, nor to attach importance to miracles, as the main elements in religion, but to seek the truths of religion within their own souls, and to preach to men what God reveals to them there. Thus religion should be no longer cold and formal, but a vital personal experience.

There were those that appreciated the message of Emerson's address at once. Theodore Parker was one of these, and he wrote of it, "It was the noblest, the most inspiring strain I ever listened to." Others among the younger ministers were glad to have so earnestly and clearly said in public what they had been vaguely feeling and thinking to themselves. Few who read Emerson's address to-day will find in it anything to shock them, or even much to attract attention for its novelty. But the older heads at once saw what was involved in his message, and were filled with consterna-

tion that young men about to enter the ministry should have been given advice which, it was felt, was in danger of undermining their whole Christian faith. The address could not be allowed to pass unrebuked. Emerson's successor at the Second Church made haste to say in the *Christian Register* that Emerson was not a representative of the denomination nor of many in it, and that he was no longer considered a regular minister. The *Christian Examiner* called the address "neither good divinity nor good sense." Professor Henry Ware, Jr. felt bound to preach in the College chapel at the opening of the next term a sermon to counteract teachings which he considered denied the personality of God, and made worship impossible. Unitarian ministers' meetings debated whether Emerson were Christian, pantheist, or atheist; and writers in various newspapers attacked him.

After a year had passed Professor Andrews Norton, who had been one of the champions of the liberal party in the controversy of twenty years before,[1] girded on his armor afresh, and in an address before the alumni of the Divinity School attacked Emerson's views as "the latest form of infidelity." He solemnly gave warning that since miracles are the foundation of Christianity, whoever denies them strikes directly at its root; nothing is left of it without them. For one to pretend to be a Christian teacher and yet to disbelieve in them is treachery to God and man; and he ought to leave the ministry. To all these attacks Emerson made no reply, refusing to be drawn into controversy. But the Rev. George Ripley, one of the younger men, answered Norton at length and with great ability; while a briefer reply was modestly made by another young minister named Theodore Parker, who was soon to become the storm center of a much fiercer controversy which was not merely to con-

[1] See page 415.

cern a few of the ministers, but was seriously to disturb the peace of the whole denomination for a quarter of a century. Of him we have next to speak.

Theodore Parker was born in 1810, the eleventh and youngest child of a farmer in Lexington, where his grandfather had been captain of a company at the first battle in the American Revolution. As his father was poor, Theodore fitted himself for Harvard College while working on the farm and teaching school. He could not attend the college classes, but while he kept on teaching he took all the regular studies and passed the examinations, though for want of money to pay the tuition fee he could not graduate. While teaching in Boston at this time he listened to Dr. Beecher's preaching for a year, but it served only to confirm him in the Unitarian faith in which he had been brought up. After he had finished his course at the Divinity School he became minister of a country church at West Roxbury. In this quiet little place he was known as a faithful parish minister, remarkable chiefly for his immense reading, his prodigious memory, his wide and profound scholarship, and his mastery of many foreign languages. He had been preaching here a year when he heard Emerson's famous address, and it was three years more before he was unexpectedly lifted out of his obscurity by a sermon which he preached in 1841 at the ordination of a minister at South Boston.

Parker took for the theme of his sermon *The Transient and the Permanent in Christianity*, and it speedily brought down upon him far worse opprobrium than had fallen upon Emerson. Parker was already known as one of the Transcendentalists, and on this account some of the ministers had already refused to exchange with him. He still believed in miracles, to be sure, and that Jesus was a perfect

man; but in this sermon he insisted that Christianity does not need miracles to prove it true. It stands on its own merits. The permanent element in it is the teaching of Jesus, and the truth of that is self-evident apart from miracles; it does not rest on even the personal authority of Jesus, indeed it would still remain true though it were proved that Jesus never lived at all. On the other hand, the forms and doctrines of Christianity are transient, changing from year to year. All this, putting in concrete form what Emerson had said more abstractly, and saying for people at large what Emerson had said only for ministers, was in itself far enough from the views then held by most Unitarians; but it was made still worse by the fact that in what he said he used language which seemed sarcastic and even irreverent. Many of the Unitarians present were deeply grieved and shocked by what he said.

Still in spite of all this it is quite possible that the matter might soon have blown over and been forgotten, had not some orthodox ministers interfered. Three of them being present took notes of the most extreme things Parker had said, and at once came out in print inquiring of the Unitarian clergy in general whether they meant to endorse such views, or to regard the man who had uttered them as a Christian; while one of them even demanded that he be prosecuted for the crime of blasphemy. Perhaps they hoped in this way to win the more conservative Unitarians back to orthodoxy by showing them what Unitarianism was coming to. Although it was none of their business, they practically insisted that the Unitarians should either disown Parker or else confess active sympathy with his views. The Unitarians at once accepted the challenge, and made haste to treat him almost as a heathen and a publican. Some of his brother ministers refused henceforth to speak to him on

the street, or to shake hands with him, or to sit beside him at meetings. Some of them called him unbeliever, infidel, deist, or atheist, and tried to get him deprived of his pulpit. It was then the custom for ministers to exchange pulpits with one another each month, but the pressure against him became so strong that soon but five ministers could be found in Boston who would exchange with him; for it was felt that exchanging would mean an approval of his opinions which they were unwilling to give. The ministers in the country, however, treated him more considerately, continuing to exchange with him and to give him their friendship. There were laymen, too, who thought him not fairly treated; and believing in the right of free thought and free speech, inasmuch as he was denied a hearing in Boston pulpits they arranged for him in the next two years to give in Boston series of lectures or sermons in a public hall. In these he restated and expanded the views he had expressed in his South Boston sermon.

It was the Boston ministers who, since they felt most responsible for him, treated him in a way that would now be thought most illiberal. Some twenty-five of them had long been united in a Boston Association of Congregational (Unitarian) Ministers, who used to meet together each month and to deliver in turn a "Thursday Lecture" in the First Church. Parker was one of these. The other members now felt greatly disturbed that Parker should still be known as a member of their Association, and they considered how they might get rid of him. It was debated whether to expel him from membership outright; but they shrank from doing this, for it was precisely what they had complained of the orthodox for doing to them a generation before. Then they tried to get him to resign; but this he was unwilling to do, feeling that a vital question of prin-

ciple was involved. While all respected him for his character, and many of them still esteemed him as a friend, they entirely disapproved of his religious views. Furthermore he was frequently aggressive in manner, sarcastic in speech, and vehement in denunciation of those whose views differed from his own, and these characteristics alienated from him many of his fellow-ministers who might have stood by him. Even Dr. Channing, who continued to the end to be his friend, was doubtful whether he should be called a Christian. Yet so long as his own congregation were satisfied with him there was no way to turn him out of the Unitarian ministry. The result was that the ministers simply gave him the cold shoulder, made him feel unwelcome at their meetings, and after a little devised a scheme to keep him from delivering the Thursday Lecture; so that in a year or two they had so far frozen him out that he seldom attended the Association, and had little more to do with most of its members. Though he was never expelled from the Association or from the Unitarian ministry, in the Unitarian Year Book his name was never included in the list of ministers and churches except in 1846 and 1848, and in the printed list of members of the Boston Association it never appeared at all.

There were a few of the ministers, however, who though they did not agree with Parker's views did believe more than the rest in religious freedom, and acted accordingly. Thus the Rev. John T. Sargent exchanged with Parker in 1844, but for doing so he was so sharply called to account by the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches which employed him that he felt bound in self-respect to resign his pulpit. James Freeman Clarke also exchanged with him the next year, whereupon fifteen families emphasized their protest by seceding from his church and organizing a short-lived one of their

own. Parker was now so fully shut out of Boston pulpits by their ministers that a group of laymen determined that, whether the clergy would or no, he should have a chance to be heard in Boston. In the face of strong opposition they secured a large hall for him to preach in, and as the congregation steadily increased it soon organized as the Twenty-eighth Congregational Society, and settled Parker as its minister. Though most of the newspapers and all the magazines threw the weight of their influence against him, he won a tremendous hold on the common people, and so long as he preached there he was by far the most influential minister in Boston, week after week crowding Music Hall with its three thousand people, who had come to hear not sensations or popular oratory, but plain, earnest, fearless discussion of the most serious themes.

Parker's work was henceforth that of one disowned and opposed by most of his own denomination. As his thought grew clearer he became more radical, though never less religious; and as time went on, he threw himself ever more fully into work for the great social reforms of the day, unweariedly preaching Sundays and lecturing far and wide week days for temperance, prison reform, and the elevation of woman, and against capital punishment, war and, most of all, slavery. Thus he wore himself out. After twelve years of this incessant labor his health began to fail. The orthodox exulted, and daily at one o'clock they offered their united prayers that the great infidel, as they deemed him, might be silenced and his influence come to naught. He sought relief in travel in Europe, but it was too late. He died in 1860 at Florence, where his grave is in the English Cemetery. Then Unitarians began to appreciate and acknowledge that a great prophet had fallen. His influence among them steadily increased; and in the next generation

he had come to be admired and praised by them as second only to Channing among all their leaders.

The discussion which Parker had set going among the Unitarians went steadily on after he had ceased to have any part in it; nor did it cease after his death. But what had begun mainly as a controversy over miracles and the importance of believing in them gradually broadened out into the general question as to what was essential to Christianity, and who are to be regarded as Christians. This Radical Controversy, as it came to be known, lasted for twenty years, until it was at length swallowed up and largely forgotten in the much more serious questions raised by the Civil War. What Emerson and Parker had said in public and without apology, many others had with hesitation been thinking to themselves. As time went on these radicals as they were soon called, most of them younger men, became more numerous, and disbelief in miracles and denial of them progressed steadily. The new critical study of the Bible gave the movement a fresh impulse, and the preaching of many found a new emphasis and took on a new tone. For some time attention was so much centered on Parker that little heed was paid to what was going on in these other minds; but graduates of the Divinity School were anxiously scanned to discover whether they were departing from the true faith, complaint was expressed in public that men supposed to be Transcendentalists were narrowly treated by those who made belief in miracles practically a test of one's Christianity, and some were discouraged from continuing in the ministry. By and by the new views had spread so widely that the conservatives began to feel seriously alarmed, and the income of the American Unitarian Association seriously fell off because givers feared their money might be used to support radicalism.

At length the officers of the Association took official notice of what they could no longer ignore. In their annual report for 1853 they ascribed the slow growth of the denomination in part to radicalism, and in order to defend Unitarians against the charge of infidelity and rationalism still being made by the orthodox, they set forth a long statement of the beliefs they held, and declared the divine origin and authority of the Christian religion to be the basis of their efforts. A resolution to the same effect was unanimously adopted. Similar action was taken the same year by the Western Unitarian Conference meeting at St. Louis. In fact, throughout this whole middle period most of the Unitarians seemed to be creeping timidly along, steadying themselves by holding on to orthodoxy with one hand, highly sensitive to orthodox criticism, and pathetically anxious to be acknowledged by the orthodox as really Christian despite all differences between them. Thus in this same year at a convention at Worcester it was objected to a proposed monument to Servetus for the three hundredth anniversary of his martyrdom, that "it would offend the orthodox"! Nevertheless the orthodox showed little sign of becoming more friendly. Unitarianism had not yet found itself, and was not yet ready to go its own way alone.

The denomination had in truth come pretty much to a standstill, and seemed to be at once aimless, hopeless, and powerless. At the Autumnal Conventions (held at various places from 1842 to 1863), though the time was bristling with important questions in which the churches should have taken an active interest, the ministers discussed little but parochial subjects, and no fresh note was sounded, and no fresh inspiration given. Addressing the ministers in 1854 James Freeman Clarke rightly said that they were "a discouraged denomination." Unitarianism seemed to have

gone to seed. The orthodox took note of this, and joyfully proclaimed that Unitarianism was dying, which at the time seemed to be the case; and they kept on repeating the statement many years afterwards, even when it had ceased to be true.

The growth of the denomination was very slow. Early in the 'forties the Association, instead of spending its funds mainly in the publishing of tracts, began to pay more attention to missionary work, and gave aid to many young or feeble churches. Still, in the fifteen years which elapsed between the height of the Parker controversy and the outbreak of the Civil War, though a few new churches a year were added, so many feeble ones died that there was a net gain of only about a score. There were several causes for this slow growth. In the first place, the Unitarians had still to use a good deal of their strength in defending themselves against the attacks of the orthodox, and they suffered much from the prejudice against them which existed and hindered their growth in quarters where they were not well known. Moreover, many of the most active spirits in the denomination devoted themselves much less to spreading their own faith than to furthering great reforms. More than in most other denominations the ministers took an active part in the anti-slavery movement, and it was warmly debated in their meetings; while the temperance and other reforms absorbed the energies of some to the cost of their church work.

The most serious obstacle, however, to united effort for the common cause was radicalism. Emerson's philosophy and Parker's theology made more and more converts, and were adopted by some of the ablest and most brilliant of the ministers. By 1860 there were said to be twenty-five of them who shared Parker's views. These might have done the denomination great service, had they been fraternally

treated; but instead, the conservative majority opposed them and in large measure alienated them from it, and some of them were practically driven from the ministry. Naturally they could not do much to build up a denomination which seemed determined to put free thought and free speech under the ban. Nor, on the other hand, would the conservatives support the Association heartily so long as it was equivocal in its attitude toward radicalism. By 1859 the number of contributing churches had shrunk to forty. At meeting after meeting requests for aid to new or feeble churches had to be refused because the Association had nothing to give, and many of these churches were thus starved to death. Hence missionary enterprise languished for want of support; and some of the ablest ministers went over to the Episcopal Church, where one of them became a bishop.[1]

Considering how badly hampered it had been for lack of funds, the work of the Association was nevertheless intelligently and efficiently carried on; and in spite of all the discouraging features of this period, still there was more life, and more progress was achieved, than was apparent on the surface or realized at the time. When resources and spirits were at about their lowest ebb at the beginning of 1854, a special effort resulted in raising many thousands of dollars to spread the faith by publishing Unitarian books, in place of the tracts that had so long been issued. Much good came of this, and the churches' contributions doubled that year. At the same time enthusiasm for foreign missionary work was kindled. A generation before a good deal of interest had been felt in Unitarian work then being carried on in Calcutta, and for several years it received American support. Now again, in 1854, in consequence of reports

[1] Frederick Dan Huntington, Bishop of Central New York.

that great opportunities were opening there, the Association appointed the Rev. C. H. A. Dall as their missionary in India. His work succeeded and he planted several churches and schools there, working with the greatest devotion until his death in 1886; but no suitable successor was found to continue his labors. The following year (1855) a providential chance seemed to open for a mission also among the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota, where work was carried on for about two years.

Unprecedented emigration from New England to the Western states was now going on, and as the funds of the Association slowly increased it became possible to assist in organizing more new churches. Such important points as Milwaukee, Detroit, and San Francisco were now occupied, as were many smaller places; and the first settled minister and the first church building in Kansas were Unitarian. The Meadville Theological School, established in northwestern Pennsylvania in 1844, from that time on furnished a steady stream of young men for pioneer work in the Mississippi basin; and the Western Unitarian Conference, organized in 1852, did much to further missionary work throughout the West. In the South, however, there was little growth on account of slavery, and the churches already established there had such difficulty in keeping their pulpits filled that some time before the beginning of the Civil War several of them had passed out of existence. The most rapid growth of course was still in Massachusetts. Taking the whole country together, though many churches planted in small towns had proved to be but short-lived, the number of strong new ones founded at important centers much more than made good the loss; so that the denomination in 1860 was distinctly stronger and healthier than in 1845.

Yet when all has been told, it must still be said that in

1859 out of two hundred and fifty churches only a hundred contributed regularly to the work of the denomination; while a hundred others (and among them some of the largest and wealthiest) had never contributed at all. The Secretary of the Association in his report the next year said that Boston Unitarians saw no reason for diffusing their faith, but treated it as a luxury to be kept for themselves, as they kept Boston Common. As a rule they had done little for Unitarian missions, and it was reported that they did not wish to make Unitarians too common. Many had also come to feel that the liberalizing work of the denomination was now done, and could better be left to others; or else they were simply waiting to see what step was to be taken next.

What that next step should be, and how it could be taken unitedly, was made clear through the Civil War. During some years previous to that the tense feeling between radicals and conservatives had been relaxing. The fears of the latter had not been realized, and they were becoming more kindly in their feeling toward the former. The laymen had never felt much concern in the controversy anyway; while the ministers, meeting together in their May conferences in Boston, and in the Autumnal Conventions elsewhere, gradually learned to respect one another's religious views even if not agreeing with them. It was realized that after all they were all of the same family, had many great interests in common, and would be ready to rally to the same cause when one should present itself great enough to outweigh their differences.

That cause was found, for the time, not in religion, nor even in social reform, but in patriotism. The Unitarian ministers and churches threw themselves with great zeal into the tasks presented by the war. Some sixty of the ministers served in the army as chaplains or otherwise.

Dr. Henry W. Bellows of New York organized and led the work of the Sanitary Commission, and Dr. William G. Eliot of St. Louis formed and directed a Western Sanitary Commission, both of which throughout the war did a work similar to that of the Red Cross at a later period, and were largely supported by Unitarians; whereas the orthodox churches, criticizing these movements for not being sufficiently religious in character for churches to undertake, gave their preference to the Christian Commission, corresponding to the religious war work in later times carried on by the Young Men's Christian Association. The Unitarian Association also prepared especially for army use books and tracts which were circulated among the soldiers in very large numbers, and met with an unparalleled success. The result was that the interest of the churches in the work the Association was doing was greatly increased, churches began giving to it that had never given before, and contributions steadily rose all through the war.

Although the war-time missionary work nearly ceased, the reaction of war work upon the denomination was very marked. The Autumnal Conventions in 1862 and 1863 were the largest, most enthusiastic, and most united that had been known. The churches began to realize that there were great things to be done for the welfare of the world, and that they were called upon to bear their full part in doing them. The war was teaching the great value of organization for effective work, and the need of an efficient organization of the churches (the Association had never been more than an organization of contributing individuals) was discussed already in the second year of the war. The Autumnal Convention was not called together in 1864, but instead a special meeting of the Association was held at the end of that year. A united and enthusiastic spirit was shown. It

was reported that the Association was receiving far more calls than its funds could meet, and the calls were rapidly increasing. Unprecedented missionary opportunities were opening, for the war had had a remarkable liberalizing effect on the country, not least in matters of religion. It was at first proposed to undertake to raise regularly henceforth at least $25,000 a year for the work of the Association, instead of the bare third of that amount irregularly given during the past twenty years; but the amount was soon amended to $100,000. This further led to a proposition to call a general convention of all Unitarian churches in the country to take measures for the good of the denomination. The idea was received with enthusiasm, and both motions were unanimously carried. American Unitarianism in getting a new and wide vision of its mission had at last found itself. The organization of a National Conference soon followed, as the next chapter will relate.

CHAPTER XXXVII

AMERICAN UNITARIANISM ORGANIZED AND EXPANDING, 1865–1925

The effects of the meeting referred to at the close of the preceding chapter began at once to appear. Some, indeed, having little faith that the plan so enthusiastically proposed could actually be carried out, held back from doing anything to realize it; while some even derided it as chimerical. But in the main the denomination fell in splendidly behind its leaders. The feeling was widespread that the whole country was now as ready to accept liberal Christianity as eastern Massachusetts had been fifty years before, and that Unitarians needed only to seize the opportunity which the time offered them in order to establish in America a genuine Broad Church. Whereas in 1864 the Association had received for its general work only $6,000, and that from only fifty of the churches, and in the previous year only half as much as even this, the new appeal for $100,000 for largely increasing the work of the denomination met with a response beyond all expectation. The old givers largely multiplied their gifts, while many churches now contributed for the first time. Well before the annual meeting of the Association in May the whole sum had been considerably over-subscribed.

When therefore the national Convention of the churches met early in April in New York, the apathy and discouragement which had for twenty years hung over the denomination like a pall had already given way to buoyant enthusi-

asm and eager hope. The very time was propitious. The Civil War was evidently drawing to a close; indeed, it was but three days after the adjournment of the Convention that Lee's army surrendered at Appomattox, thus virtually ending the war. It was the first time that an attempt had been made to organize all the churches of the denomination for a common purpose, for, as has been said, the Association had been only an organization of a comparatively small number of individuals; and although churches often gave to it, they had no direct voice in planning its work.[1] Moreover, while the Association had been largely officered and managed by ministers, the Convention invited and received coöperation from the ablest laymen.

A few of the extreme churches on either wing declined to take part in the Convention, but the attendance surpassed the fondest hopes. Over two hundred churches were represented by nearly four hundred delegates. Enthusiasm was deep and strong; for they realized that they had come together, as the call said, "for the more thorough organization of the Liberal Church of America; for the more generous support of" its various lines of work. John A. Andrew, the famous "War Governor" of Massachusetts, was chosen president; but Dr. Bellows of New York was the guiding spirit of the meeting. The Convention promptly settled down to work and heard reports of work done or to be done; and on the second day it permanently organized as the National Conference of Unitarian Churches.[2] In the way of practical work it was resolved that $100,000 annually should

[1] In 1884 the Association amended its constitution so as to allow delegate representation of churches; and in 1924 steps were taken looking to the eventual extinction of individual memberships and merging with the General Conference.

[2] Name changed in 1911 to General Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches.

be raised by the churches for the work of the denomination; that $100,000 be at once raised for the endowment of Antioch College; that the theological schools at Cambridge and Meadville be more amply endowed; and that missionary work in the West be generously supported.

Active measures were at once taken for carrying these resolutions into effect. Antioch College in Ohio had been founded in 1852 on a non-sectarian basis. Its first president had been Horace Mann, a distinguished Massachusetts Unitarian, and Unitarians had from the beginning contributed to it generously, since it gave good promise of becoming as liberal an influence in the West as Harvard had been in New England. It was now in serious financial straits, and in danger of utter failure; but in less than two months after the Conference the entire sum asked for had been subscribed, and the college was saved. It was an important step toward religious freedom in American education, for there were as yet but three or four colleges in the country quite free from denominational control; and only a few years previously a distinguished chemist had failed of election to a chair at Columbia College in New York for the sole reason that he was a Unitarian. One of the most fruitful of the new plans was also to establish churches in college towns in order to reach students who might go forth and spread liberal religion widely. The first of these was at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1865, followed the next year by one at the newly founded Cornell University at Ithaca, New York, and later by others to the number of some twenty in all.

Steps were at once taken to revive the churches in the South that had been closed during the war. A missionary was also sent to California, and within the next four or five years five new churches were planted in important towns on

the Pacific Coast. Over a hundred ministers were sent into new territory for longer or shorter periods of missionary preaching, and in less than four years the number of churches had increased thirty per cent. Within a year the churches of the Western Conference had doubled in numbers and strength, support of the Sunday-school Society had largely increased, and the Association had received important legacies. Whereas the denomination had for many years before the close of the war made little progress, within eighteen months from the calling of the New York convention over forty churches and nearly forty ministers had been added to the roll. Unitarianism in America had almost at a bound come to realize itself as a national movement instead of merely "a Boston notion," and to be united for aggressive work.

All these reports of progress brought great cheer to the second meeting of the National Conference, held in 1866 at Syracuse, where further plans for organizing the denomination were matured. Of these the most important was to divide the whole country into districts, each with its local conference, which should draw neighboring churches together for closer fellowship and united work. Four such already existed, and fourteen more were now organized, which did much to unite the churches in sympathy, and especially in missionary work and the raising of money. A gesture was also made toward cultivating acquaintance and good feeling with liberal spirits in other denominations, and to this end the Conference voted to change its name so as to read, "Unitarian *and other Christian* Churches." But although for a time a little progress seemed to be made in this direction, nothing permanent was achieved. Carrying out the plans made at the first meeting, the Conference now raised on the spot an endowment for a new chair at the Meadville school;

and a new newspaper, "The Liberal Christian," was soon established in New York.

The next two years continued to be a time of rapid development. Unitarian theater meetings were held in most of the large cities of the country from Boston to San Francisco, and were attended by large crowds who eagerly listened to Unitarian views of religion. Week after week for four years the largest theater in Boston was crowded for such services; and as a result of these meetings, Young Men's Christian Unions were organized in a number of cities. A new School for the Ministry was opened in Boston in 1867, to prepare men of incomplete education for rough and ready missionary work. The local conferences had a stimulating effect, and the individual churches were roused to great local activity. Large sums were raised for philanthropies, and generous aid was given toward elevating the condition of those lately freed from slavery in the South.

This high tide of enthusiasm and united work, however, did not long remain at its first level. Reaction from the exultation over the ending of the war set in, and after a year the contributions for the general work of the Association fell back to less than $50,000. Worse than this, dissensions were again developing within the denomination. The radical controversy, which seemed to have died out during the war, reappeared in a new shape. It was now not so much a question of miracles, for perhaps half the denomination now sympathized with Parker on that point, and a hundred of the ministers looked up to him as one of the best of Christians; but when the National Conference came to organize it became necessary to define who might belong to it, for it was felt that it should be unmistakably a Christian conference. At first a persistent attempt was made by conservatives to set up a creed as a condition of membership in the Confer-

ence. This attempt failed, but the constitution adopted did refer to Jesus Christ as Lord and as son of God;[1] and these expressions contained the seeds of thirty years' trouble, for they were taken to imply beliefs which the radicals felt they could not with good conscience accept. Dissatisfaction over the matter steadily increased during the year, and it was well organized when the Conference met at Syracuse the next year, where the radicals proposed to amend the constitution so as to base its action rather on unity of spirit than on uniformity of belief,[2] and to avoid the objectionable expressions. The subject was earnestly debated through a whole session, but the radicals were overwhelmingly defeated.

It was said on the conservative side that the radicals ought to leave the denomination, and this some of them now proceeded to do. Before the next spring they had taken steps to form the Free Religious Association on a basis that should allow them the freedom which they felt that the National Conference had refused to grant. This new Association was organized in 1867 with much enthusiasm. About half its original members had been Unitarian ministers, and Emerson's name was first on the list; yet not all were radicals, nor were all Unitarians, for half-a-dozen religious elements were represented in it. It offered hospitality to every form of religious thought, and cultivated sympathy with other religions than Christianity; but though it held annual conventions and issued various publications, it did not attempt to form new organizations, still less a new de-

[1] ". . . all disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ . . . the service of God and the building-up of the kingdom of his Son."

[2] ". . . disregarding all sectarian or theological differences, and offering a cordial fellowship to all who will join with them in Christian work."

nomination. Indeed, though a very few of its members withdrew from the denomination, many of them still remained in the National Conference to agitate for broader freedom. For a quarter of a century it exercised an important influence in broadening religious sympathies, and it still continues its existence; but its mission was largely accomplished in its first twenty-five years.

While the extreme conservatives were satisfied with the result of the vote at Syracuse, many others felt that the Conference had taken too narrow ground, thus unjustly excluding from it some deeply religious and conscientious men. Nearly a hundred of the ministers either had joined the Free Religious Association or were in sympathy with it. The result was that at the next meeting of the Conference in New York in 1868, with a larger attendance than ever before, an amendment [1] was almost unanimously adopted which was calculated to ease the consciences of the radical members of the Conference. It was now the turn of the conservatives to feel aggrieved, for they interpreted this action as a virtual surrender of the Conference's allegiance to Christianity, by yielding to the radicals nearly all that they had asked for. As radicalism was steadily spreading, and the majority of the recent graduates of the Divinity School and even a few from Meadville were given to it, the conservatives now began to agitate more than ever for some means of excluding from the denomination those who could not accept their definition of Christianity.

The American Unitarian Association took broad ground, wishing to include both wings of the denomination, and recog-

1 ". . . all the declarations of this Conference, including the Preamble and Constitution, are expressions only of its majority, committing in no degree those who object to them."

nizing both conservatives and radicals without prejudice. But the conservatives insisted that unless it would withhold recognition and aid from radicals, it would not deserve the support of the denomination, and they urged churches to cease contributing until the question was settled. As no satisfaction was given them, they early in 1870 proposed the forming of an Evangelical Unitarian Association, with a creed for its basis. Had this been formed, the denomination would have been split in two; but by the great majority it was strongly and successfully opposed.

The leader in this "new movement," as it was called, was the Rev. George H. Hepworth, a popular preacher of Boston, whose enthusiasm had launched the theater services and the new School for the Ministry. Removing to New York he had many requests from his hearers for some authorized statement of what Unitarians believed. As he and his friends were anxious both to exclude radicals from the denomination and to stand well in the eyes of the orthodox, they began an insistent agitation to get some such statement adopted, and they urged the Association at its meeting in 1870 to take steps in this direction. But Unitarians have ever been suspicious of anything that might be taken as a binding creed, and the motion was heavily defeated. At the National Conference in the autumn the attempt was renewed; and as the subject had for months been earnestly discussed in pulpit and in print, the very large number of delegates gathered in suppressed excitement. Mr. Hepworth moved to substitute for the amendment adopted at the last Conference a new one re-affirming allegiance to Jesus Christ.[1] After being earnestly debated for a day and a half, it was finally carried by a vote of eight to one, while the minority

[1] "Re-afirming our allegiance to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, . . . we invite to our fellowship all who wish to be followers of Christ."

were hissed. Thus the door was again shut against the radicals.[1]

Cleavage between the two wings of the denomination now became sharper than ever, and the radical minority, though steadily increasing in number, naturally felt little enthusiasm about taking part in denominational enterprises. For twelve long years nothing was done to make them feel themselves welcome members of their own denomination. On the contrary, in what was known as the Year-Book Controversy, the situation was emphasized anew. The President of the Free Religious Association had in 1873 asked that his name be removed from the list of ministers in the Unitarian Year-Book, on the ground that he was no longer a Unitarian Christian. Upon this, the editor ventured to inquire of several other ministers supposed to believe as he did whether they wished their names to be retained. One of these was the Rev. William J. Potter of New Bedford, Secretary of the Free Religious Association. He replied that he did not call himself a Christian in the doctrinal sense of the word, but he placed upon the editor the responsibility of deciding whether to omit the name. The editor therefore omitted his name along with the others. As the case became public it attracted wide attention and severe criticism; for it was felt by many that a man of admitted Christian character had been virtually excluded from the denomination simply because he would not describe himself by a certain name. The conservatives applauded the action, while the liberals regretted it; but after full discussion in print and in debates it was approved at meetings of both the Association and the

[1] Though he had won his point, Hepworth became increasingly dissatisfied with the position of the denomination, and grew steadily more orthodox. Two years later he left his church and entered the orthodox ministry. Late in life he made overtures for returning to the Unitarian pulpit, but he was discouraged from doing so.

National Conference. Protests and criticisms continued to be made over what was felt by many to have been an act of narrow injustice, but it was not until 1883 that the omitted names were restored to the list of ministers, at first half-heartedly, and only in a supplementary list.[1]

Time slowly did its work. Those who had been the strongest bulwarks of conservatism passed away, or ceased to be active, or softened in their feeling; while the younger men coming forward had most of them grown up in a liberal atmosphere. At length, at the National Conference in 1882, the liberal spirit prevailed, and with but one dissenting voice an amendment[2] was adopted opening the door again to those who had felt themselves excluded by the action taken in 1870. Thus the cause for which Parker's name had long before been omitted from the Year Book had, after forty years, won in the struggle for spiritual freedom. His name had now for some years been spoken with much respect and honor by leaders in the denomination as one of its great prophets; and the Association in 1885 finally set the seal of approval upon him by publishing a volume of his writings.

Meanwhile the high hopes of a very rapid spread of the denomination, and the rosy dreams of $100,000 a year for general missionary purposes, which had been realized for a year or two after the organization of the National Conference, began to be disappointed. The lack of sympathy between conservatives and radicals was to no small degree responsible for this, for the national Association in trying to conciliate both wings of the denomination succeded in win-

[1] First and last some six names were concerned.

[2] "The Preamble and Articles of our Constitution . . . are no authoritative test of Unitarianism, and are not intended to exclude from our fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our purposes and practical aims."

ning the generous confidence of neither; so that many churches in both wings would not contribute to the support of its work liberally and generously, if at all. After the conservative victory at the National Conference in 1870, it is true, contributions for missionary work more than doubled for a single year; but on the whole there was a steady decline from the $100,000 of 1865 to less than a quarter of that sum in 1878. Church extension was steadily carried on, but it was at the cost of steady encroachment upon the capital of the general funds of the Association. This whole period was marked by lack of spirit, of enthusiasm, and of confidence.

Other causes, however, contributed to this end. The period of inflation and extravagance following the Civil War was followed by one of financial depression which affected all enterprises. The great conflagration in Chicago in 1871 and in Boston the following year at once diminished the resources of many of the churches and increased the demands made upon them. The severe financial panic of 1873 laid its heavy hand for several years upon the whole country. Altogether it is surprising that the work of the denomination did not suffer more seriously than it did.

In spite of all these unfavorable conditions, the main body of the churches remained stedfast to their cause. The National Conferences were largely attended, and continued to plan for carrying on the work of the denomination. If the general contributions to the Association fell off, yet large sums were given for special denominational causes. Generous endowments were raised for additional professorships at the Harvard Divinity School and the Meadville Theological School. Large subscriptions were raised for relief of the churches suffering in the Chicago fire, to erect a national church at Washington, and a Channing Memorial

church at Newport on the centennial of Channing's birth, and to raise crushing debts upon important churches in New York, New Orleans, and elsewhere. The denomination also supported important educational work for both the whites and the negroes in the South; prosecuted welfare work among the Indians in the West, and among seamen; continued its successful mission in India, for several years supported Unitarian preaching in Paris, and sent aid to the needy Unitarian Church in Hungary.

At home aid was given to an increasing number of young or feeble churches, and many new churches were founded and many missionary preachers were employed, especially in the West; and a promising beginning was made of work among the Scandinavians of the Northwest. New churches were established in Washington Territory, Southern California, and the Southern States. The work in college towns was much extended. In 1876 a Ministers' Institute was formed for stimulating scholarly interests among the ministers; and in 1880 a Women's Auxiliary Conference was organized, which ten years later became the National Alliance of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women,[1] and has been of the greatest service in uniting the women of the denomination for effective work. Thus, in spite of all interferences, the progress of organizing and extending the Unitarian movement in America, which began with the National Conference in 1865, made headway. In half a generation not only had many of the older churches gained in strength, but over a hundred additions had been made to the lists of churches and ministers. Nevertheless those unfriendly to Unitarianism still continued to repeat that the cause was dying.

While the work of the American Unitarian Association

[1] The word National was dropped in 1913.

had from the beginning been designed to cover the whole country, the Western Unitarian Conference, comprising a vast territory, became semi-national in its scope, and ran a more or less independent course, and for much of the time carried on an independent work west of the Alleghanies. Its parallel history therefore deserves particular attention. The Western Conference was organized at Cincinnati in 1852 when as yet there were not a dozen well-rooted churches in the whole West, separated by great distances and connected by scanty means of communication. In scores of promising young towns where orthodox religion had largely lost its hold upon the people and they were in danger of relapsing into irreligion, Unitarian preaching was eagerly welcomed. But ministers were hard to get, and new churches multiplied but slowly, while many prematurely formed soon died for want of competent leadership. The anti-slavery conflict also interfered with the growth of the movement in the West, and in the Civil War more than half of the ministers went to the front as chaplains or as soldiers; yet at the end of the war the Conference contained some thirty-five churches. In the revival following the organization of the National Conference, the Association kept a missionary Secretary in the West for some years, and many new churches were planted; while from 1875 on the Conference had its own Secretary in the field, and extension went on faster than ever. In due time a Women's Conference, a Sunday-school Society, and various state conferences were established; a newspaper (*Unity*), many tracts, and series of Sunday-school lessons, were published; and Unity Clubs and Post-office Missions were formed in many of the churches. The conference had its own missionary funds and missionaries, and with the assistance of the Association denominational work was carried on with great zeal.

Meantime doctrinal changes were going on even more rapidly than in the East. The churches established in the early days of the Conference were generally conservative, and in the Parker controversy they took ground against Parker's views, though refusing to adopt an authoritative statement of belief. But radical views early appeared, and there was little in either tradition or environment to keep them in check. During the controversy in the National Conference over radicalism, sympathy in most of the churches went with the radicals, and any tendency toward a creed was strongly resisted. In 1875 resolutions were unanimously passed sympathizing with the Free Religious Association as well as with the American Unitarian Association, and a unanimous protest was also made against the action taken by the Association in the Year Book cases. As a further comment upon the conservative position of the National Conference, it was also unanimously resolved that "the Conference conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all thereto who desire to work with it in advancing the Kingdom of God." For ten years a steady movement went on to purge the constitutions of state conferences and local churches of everything that might seem to limit perfect freedom of belief.

There were those, however, who saw that unlimited freedom brought with it grave dangers to the cause, and for this reason some ministers had already withdrawn from the Conference. It had been loosely organized, and in many places, in churches composed largely of come-outers, irreparable damage had been done by irresponsible free-lances calling themselves Unitarians. As the growth of the churches had not kept pace with that of the population, the Secretary of the Conference became convinced that the trouble was that it had not stood definitely enough for cer-

tain fundamental beliefs, and that further mischief might be prevented, and the religious reputation of the Conference be redeemed, if it were to set forth a statement of the central religious beliefs it stood for. He strongly urged this action at the Conference at St. Louis in 1885, though no action was taken; but in the course of the following year the matter developed into what became known as "the issue in the West," which reached its crisis at the meeting at Cincinnati in 1886.

The Conference was sharply divided on the question. On the one hand were those who felt the time had come for the Conference clearly to indicate in a few simple words that it stood for Christian belief in God; and that without this there was danger that it might be vitally injured, if not overwhelmed, by unbelievers of every sort claiming to be Unitarians.[1] On the other hand were those who felt that even the simplest statement or implication of theological beliefs would in effect be taken as a creed, and used to make certain beliefs obligatory upon the members of the Conference, and that this would be the end of the religious freedom of Unitarianism. It was not a division of believers against unbelievers, for both sides were equally devout, and held practically the same religious beliefs. It was the question whether the Conference should insist first upon the beliefs it stood for, or upon the work it aimed to do; and whether it was willing to shut out any one from joining in that work simply because he did not profess certain beliefs.

The debate on the question was long, earnest, and painful; but at the end it was resolved by a decisive majority that "the Western Unitarian Conference conditions its fellowship on no dogmatic tests, but welcomes all who wish to join it

[1] As a matter of fact there were only one or two such cases, and those were short-lived. The danger was theoretical rather than actual.

to help establish Truth, Righteousness, and Love in the world." The decision brought great grief to the conservatives, for the words Christianity, religion, and even God, had been deliberately left out of the constitution, and nothing seemed to be left but truth, righteousness, and love. If even an agnostic or an atheist claimed recognition as a Unitarian, the Conference would not close the door against him. A few weeks afterwards the conservatives resigned from the Conference and organized a Western Unitarian Association, to coöperate with the national Association in its missionary work. It was never much more than an organization on paper, and it did no missionary work of its own; but its leaders maintained their own periodical (*The Unitarian*), and did what they could to discourage the churches from coöperating with the Western Conference. The controversy rapidly spread east and west, and dragged on for half a dozen years, and it was also taken up vigorously even in the English Unitarian papers. Although the Conference at its next meeting (1887) published a noble statement of the beliefs commonly held by its members, it was repeatedly charged that the Western Conference had adopted an atheistic and non-Christian basis. The charge was so far believed that the national Association, reflecting the sentiment of the eastern churches, for several years refused to coöperate with the Western Conference in missionary work, and maintained its own western agent.

The result of the controversy, in which for a long time neither side would yield any ground, was that there were for some years practically two denominations of Unitarians in the West, working separately, and critical of each other. The forces of the denomination were thus badly divided, and its missionary work severely crippled. In fact, the work in the West never quite returned to its former vigor.

In time, however, the two factions came to understand each other better, and in 1892 effective steps were taken to heal the breach. Finally at the meeting of the National Conference in 1894 the constitution was again revised [1] in a way so broad as to satisfy both conservatives and radicals, and it was adopted unanimously by acclamation. With this action the doctrinal differences that had disturbed the peace and hindered the growth of the denomination for over half a century subsided, and have not again arisen; for it is realized that perfect spiritual freedom has been achieved.

From that time on the life of the denomination has been healthy, and its progress in strength, though not rapid, has been steady. Many new churches have been planted in the far West and in the South, as well as on the eastern seaboard; an important missionary enterprise in Japan was undertaken in 1889, and more efficient organization of forces has been steadily won. The forming of the Young People's Religious Union in 1896 was the beginning of a movement of great and increasing importance; and in 1919 the Laymen's League took its place beside the Woman's Alliance and brought undreamed-of vigor into the life of the churches. The organization of the International Congress of Free Christians and Other Religious Liberals in 1900, and of the National Federation of Religious Liberals in 1908, have brought the denomination into active sympathy with kindred movements in other lands and other churches.

At the end of the first hundred years of the American Unitarian Association the Unitarian churches of the country are more than twice as numerous and far more than twice as

[1] "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man . . . and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

strong and well organized as they were when the National Conference was organized. They are far more united in spirit, more positive and wholesome in their thought, and more hopeful of their future than they then were. Their contributions for common work are now more in a single year than they formerly were for many years together, and their annual circulation of books and tracts has been multiplied by twenty. Their share in the work of education, philanthropy, reforms, and public leadership has always been far out of proportion to their numerical strength. Their thought has been so largely assimilated by other denominations that many churches calling themselves orthodox, and holding themselves quite aloof from Unitarians, are now much farther away from Calvinism than Channing was. Yet on the other hand they see great multitudes whose religion seems to belong rather to the eighteenth century than to the twentieth. Much as has been accomplished to spread the enlightenment and the inspiration of liberal Christianity, there seems as yet no end to the work for them still to do; and at the end of their first century's history American Unitarians face the future with clearer vision of their opportunity, with stronger faith in their cause, and with firmer confidence in its destiny, than at any time in the past.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE MEANING AND LESSON OF UNITARIAN HISTORY

We have come to the end of our history. It has been a long story—nearly four centuries, almost as long as that of Protestantism itself. We have followed the course of a movement which has profoundly influenced the religious life of Poland and Transylvania, England and America, has furnished important episodes in that of Italy and Switzerland, Germany and Holland, and has left a lasting impression on the thought and tendencies of the Protestant world. The orthodox Protestantism of the twentieth century, in both its teachings and its spirit, is a far different thing from what it would have been if Servetus, Socinus and David, Lindsey, Priestley and Martineau, Channing and Parker had never lived, and if Calvin and Luther had been suffered to rule the thought and life of their followers unchallenged and uncriticized. In so far as the religious life of our time is comparatively free, reasonable, and tolerant, and lays greater stress upon personal character and lives of service than upon the doctrines of theology, the pioneers and prophets of the movement whose course we have been tracing deserve much more credit than has generally been given them.

Now that we have heard the story, what is the real meaning of it all? It has not been merely a long attempt to substitute one set of doctrines for another. That has often

been involved in it, it is true; but beneath all this has been something far deeper and more important. For if men are to change their beliefs from one age to another, as they get new light or discover new truth, their minds must be left free in their search, and not be barred in this direction or that; nor can their new beliefs be shared with others unless there is also freedom of speech and of press. Hence the first thing that has characterized this history has been its steady tendency toward perfect spiritual freedom. When creeds or dogmas were opposed, it was not more because they were disbelieved than because they stood in the way of freedom of thought in religion with a "thus far but no further," and because free spirits were unwilling that other men should forbid them to judge for themselves as to the teachings of the Bible or of their own consciences. Unitarianism, then, has meant first of all religious freedom and escape from bondage to creeds; and throughout their whole history Unitarians have stedfastly refused to set up any creed, even the shortest, as a test which must be passed by those who would join them.

Yet freedom may go wild unless it is guided by some wholesome principle. This principle Unitarians have found in the use of reason in religion; and this has been their second main point of emphasis. They have believed that God would most safely and surely lead them into more truth when they most used the faculties he has given them for discerning truth from error. They have therefore seen little cause to follow traditions from the past simply because they were old, unless they could show good reason for being. At first they were content to ask simply whether doctrines could be supported by Scripture; but at length they came to realize that even what the Bible teaches is merely what men of olden time thought and felt and did,

and that reason and conscience must decide for us whether their ways must be ours, or whether we must come to fresh convictions, experiences, and principles for our own new time.

Once again, Unitarians were not long in discovering that if they were to claim for themselves the right of full freedom of belief and of teaching in religion, they must of course grant similar freedom to others. It was at first hard for them to accept the consequences of this principle, and for a time they yielded to the temptation to repress or to cast out from their number those who seemed to them to go too far from familiar ways; but they eventually saw that there can be no perfect freedom in religion unless there is perfect mutual toleration. And this was well; for just as truth can be trusted in the long run and in a fair field to stand on its own merits without fear or favor, so it may be trusted that error will in the end be discovered, and will certainly perish of itself.

It is the emphasis on these things, far more than on any mere Unitarian doctrines, that during nearly four centuries have more and more given Unitarianism its distinctive character; and perhaps the most that need be said about those doctrines is that they are the ones that men will be most likely to come to when their minds are left unbiased and free in relation to religion, when they make unhindered use of reason in thinking about religion, and when entire religious toleration is given them. Yet after these points are gained, something still remains. What is religion for, practically, any way, and what is the final test of it? The Unitarian answer has consistently been that the true test of a good religion is not orthodoxy of belief, but that it is to be found in the kind of characters it produces; and that we do not realize its whole purpose until we get beyond

thought of ourselves, and give ourselves to the service of others, as all members of one great family of God.

When the Unitarian movement began, the marks of true religion were commonly thought to be belief in the creeds, membership in the church, and participation in its rites and sacraments. To the Unitarian of to-day the marks of true religion are spiritual freedom, enlightened reason, broad and tolerant sympathy, upright character and unselfish service. These things, which go to the very heart of life, best express the meaning and lesson of Unitarian history. The difference between these two views of religion marks a great revolution, and it has been a costly one. To make it possible Servetus, Gentile, David, and a score or more of others suffered death; Gribaldo, Ochino, Socinus, and the Polish Brethren endured persecution or went into exile. For this Bidle and Emlyn were imprisoned; Lindsey and Priestley had obloquy heaped upon them; and numberless others in great ways or in small have sacrificed or suffered or been outcast for this faith. Without these and what they endured in their cause, we should now be enjoying but little of the liberty that is ours to-day. How can we better show appreciation of the free faith that inspires and comforts our lives to-day than by keeping it pure and handing it on stronger than ever to those that shall come after us?

APPENDIX

THE THREE GREAT CREEDS OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

A. THE APOSTLES' CREED

This Creed is so called from the legend that the twelve apostles met soon after the death of Jesus and composed it, each of them contributing one sentence. In reality, it originated at Rome in the third quarter of the second century. It was never adopted by the Eastern Church, but has been widely accepted by both Roman Catholics and Protestants as the simplest statement of the essentials of Christian faith. In the enlarged form now current it runs as follows:

> I believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell, the third day he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty, whence he is to come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, the life eternal.

B. THE NICENE CREED

This Creed (see pages 22, 24, 25) was adopted at the Council of Nicæa (325), and brought forward in a revised form at the Council of Constantinople (381), but it was not

finally sanctioned in the form now current until the Council of Chalcedon (451). It is the one creed recognized by both the Eastern and the Western Church, from which it has been inherited by orthodox Protestantism. Like the Apostles' Creed, it forms a part of the liturgy of the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church. In the version given below, italics denote parts added to the original Creed of 325, while parts later omitted from that are bracketed.

We believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of *heaven and earth, and of* all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the *only-begotten* Son of God, begotten of the Father (the only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father) *before all worlds* (God of God and) light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made (both in heaven and on earth); who for us men, and for our salvation, came down *from heaven,* and was incarnate *of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,* and was made man; *and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and* suffered, *and was buried,* and the third day rose again, *according to the Scriptures, and* ascended into heaven, *and sits at the right hand of the Father, and* comes *again with glory* to judge the living and the dead; *whose kingdom will have no end.*

And in the Holy Spirit, *the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father* [*and the Son*],[1] *who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.*

In one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(But those who say, There was when he was not; and, Before he was begotten he was not; and, He was made out of

[1] Added at the Council of Toledo, 589.

nothing; or who profess that he is of a different person or substance, or created, or changeable, or variable, are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.)

C. THE ATHANASIAN CREED

This Creed (see page 25) was long supposed to have come from Athanasius himself, but it is of unknown date and source. It was composed under the influence of St. Augustine, and is believed to have originated in Southern Gaul in the fifth century or later, as an explanation of the Nicene Creed. It was accepted only in the Western Church. Its required use on certain occasions in the worship of the Church of England has served to keep the doctrine of the Trinity unusually prominent in English theology. It is sometimes referred to by the first words of its Latin form, as the *Quicumque vult*.

1. Whosoever would be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith,
2. Which except one keep entire and inviolate, he will without doubt perish everlastingly.
3. Now the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in a Trinity, and the Trinity in a Unity;
4. Neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.
5. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit.
6. But the divinity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, is one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.
7. As is the Father, so is the Son, and so is the Holy Spirit.
8. The Father is uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated.

9. The Father is immeasurable, the Son immeasurable, the Holy Spirit immeasurable.

10. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal.

11. And yet there are not three eternal, but one eternal.

12. Just as there are not three uncreated, nor three immeasurable, but one uncreated, and one immeasurable.

13. Likewise the Father is omnipotent, the Son omnipotent, and the Holy Spirit omnipotent.

14. And yet there are not three omnipotent, but one omnipotent.

15. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

16. And yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God.

17. So the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord.

18. And yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord.

19. For just as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person by himself as both God and Lord,

20. So we are forbidden by the catholic religion to say three Gods, or three Lords.

21. The Father was not made by any one, nor created, nor begotten.

22. The Son is from the Father alone; not made, nor created, but begotten.

23. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son; not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

24. Therefore there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

25. And in this Trinity there is no before or after, no greater or less.

26. But the whole three persons are co-eternal with one another, and co-equal.

27. So that in all things, just as has already been said

above, both the Unity is to be worshiped in a Trinity, and the Trinity in a Unity.

28. Let him therefore that would be saved think thus of the Trinity.

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29. But it is necessary to eternal salvation that one faithfully believe also in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

30. Now the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally God and man.

31. God, of the substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds, and man, of the substance of his mother, born in the world.

32. Perfect God, perfect man, subsisting of a rational soul and a human body.

33. In his divinity equal to the Father, in his humanity less than the Father.

34. Who, although he be God and man, yet is not two, but one Christ.

35. One, moreover, not by converting his divinity into flesh, but by taking up his humanity into God.

36. Wholly one, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person.

37. For just as a rational soul and a human body is one man, so God and man is one Christ.

38. Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, the third day rose again from the dead,

39. Ascended to heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty,

40. Whence he is to come to judge the living and the dead.

41. At whose coming all men have to rise again with their bodies,

42. And are to render account of their deeds.

43. And they that have done good will go into life eternal; but they that have done evil, into fire eternal.

44. This is the catholic faith, which except one believe faithfully and firmly, he can not be saved.

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(Note: The pronunciation of foreign names likely to be mispronounced is approximately indicated in brackets following the names. Pronounce *ay* as in *day; ch,* like the German *ch; dh,* like the *th* in *the; eh,* like the *e* in *bed; err,* as in *berry; gh,* like the *g* in *go; gy,* like the *d* in *educate; ly,* as in *halyard; n,* like the French nasal *n; ö,* as in German, or like the French *eu* in *fleur; ow,* as in *cow; ss,* as in *mass; ü,* as in German, or like the French *u; zh,* like the *z* in *azure.*)

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